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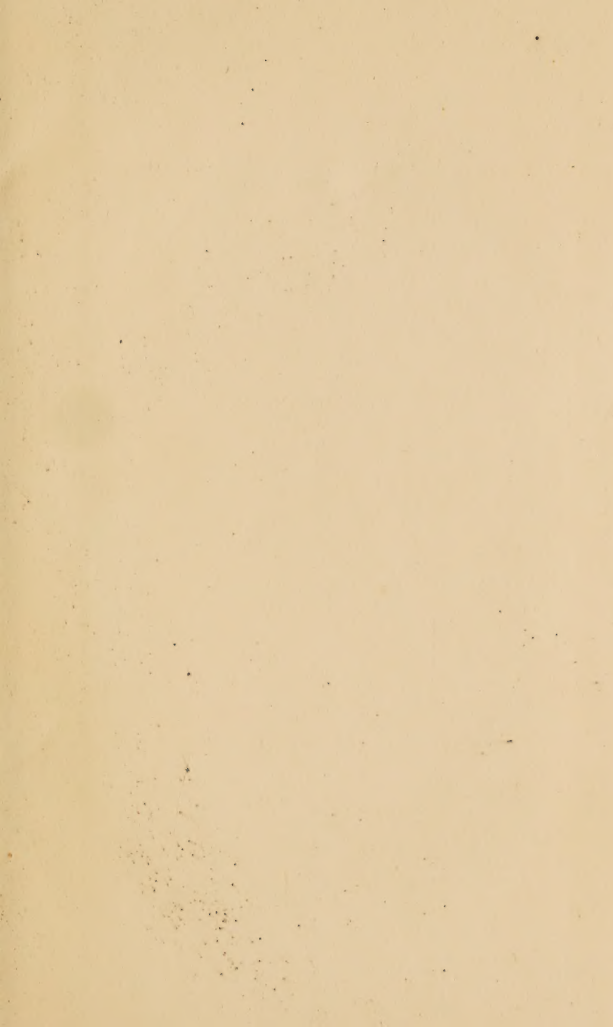



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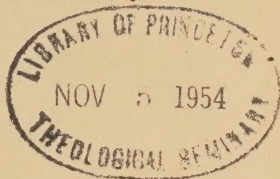
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CRYSTALS.



BY

ANNE M. MITCHELL,

AUTHOR OF "FREED BOY IN ALABAMA," "THE GOLDEN PRIMER," ETC.

"Which things
Are crystals to cut life upon,
Although such trifles."

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I.

Every Day in thy Life is a Leaf in thy
History.

CRYSTALS.

I.

*EVERY DAY IN THY LIFE IS A LEAF IN
THY HISTORY.*

DAYLIGHT scarcely gone, a new moon in a clear evening sky, crisp, crackling snow under our feet, the freshly-lighted factory lamps shining out by hundreds, and ourselves walking briskly on, wrapped in furs, toward a beautifully-ordered home, where warmth and sweet greeting await us. Could life, do you think, Minnie, hold a more pleasant moment?"

So one of the two, who were taking

quick, cheerful steps toward home, said to the other.

But a person behind them, a factory girl just from work, hearing the sentence, bitterly turned it from their joy and fullness to her sorrow and emptiness.

“Daylight gone,” she said to herself, “a new moon in a chilly sky, hard, cold snow under the feet, those horrible lights glaring out on the air, bringing the close smell of the factory, with its din and whirl and jar and confusion, all about me, myself forlorn and hungry, walking homeward, thinly clad, to a scanty supper and a few hours of snatched rest. Could life hold a moment more dismal?”

It was not Mary's way to complain. For years she had measured the distance daily between her home and the

factory with the same hard work at the end, yet for the most part she had gone patiently, knowing that it was the path marked out for her, and accepting it as such. The same busy whirl and clatter had been ever around her at her work. She had seen the lights of the factory on the snow in winter hundreds of times, and her fingers had chilled as often in the keen air. Her rest had always been broken at early morning, and her food, although plentiful, was plain and coarse; yet until this night she had never complained. I think it must have been a sudden insight into a life such as she had never imagined, and so much above her own in comfort, which made her feel as she did. These few words, spoken by one who had all her heart could wish, days of ease and nights of

pleasure, roused all the bitterness of which she was capable.

She gave one glance at the richly-robed figures before her, and her heart turning cold and hard against them, she pressed on quickly, drawing her thin shawl about her.

"Only one of the factory girls," said one to the other as she passed them quickly.

"Only a factory girl!" Mary repeated bitterly to herself; "that is all I am or ever shall be—a poor, slaving factory girl." So there was no light in the clear evening sky for her, no beauty in the crystal-laden trees and the white-mantled earth. Walking on very hastily, she left the two young ladies far in the distance, and passed the gate of their home long before they came in sight of it. The large white house

stood back from the road and spread over a large portion of the ground. Out from between the heavy curtains of the large bow-window the firelight flickered on the snow and spread diamonds there. Mary could see the rich furnishing of the room within, and a stately figure in long, sweeping robes moving to and fro from end to end of the long parlor. Some one sat at an instrument, for the sound of soft music just reached the ear of the outside listener. Elegance and comfort repeated everywhere. Mary's face wore a hard and bitter look as she turned from her moment's hesitation, and it had not died away when she opened the door of her home and stepped in.

Her mother, an aged woman, was moving about slowly, placing knives

and forks on the table, and her younger sister, just come in from a factory in an opposite direction, sat bending over the fire warming her chilled hands.

“Come, girls,” said the mother, cheerfully; “I’ve a bit of hot meat for you to-night, and some fresh bread, with a cup of tea. Sit up to the table and have something to eat and drink. That will warm you sooner than anything.”

The younger one sprang up and complied with the request, remarking that she was very thankful for something warm. Mary obeyed too, but silently, and as she moodily broke the warm corn-cake, she wondered what the two she had passed would have thought of such a supper.

“What is the matter with you to-

night, Mary?" asked her mother; "you don't seem happy."

"Nothing is the matter, mother," she returned, hesitating a moment, and finding no better excuse for her moodiness.

Her supper strengthened and refreshed her, if she only would have acknowledged it, but she was so unwilling to see anything but misery, and so discontented with her lot, that she almost accused a Providence which had placed her where she was, as she thought, to be miserable.

She went to rest very soon. The fire had no charm for her, although it glowed most invitingly. All she cared for was to drown her misery in sleep. So leaving her mother and sister chatting in the warmth, she found her way up stairs into her cold room. Very

cheerless and desolate she felt it to be there, and ridding herself of her clothing as quickly as possible, she placed herself in a bed which seemed hard and cold, and sank almost immediately into an uneasy slumber. When her sister came in she woke again.

“Why, Mary, how pretty it is here!” she said, cheerfully; “the moonlight is shining all over the floor and giving us a silver carpet. The weather is moderating, too, I think; at any rate it is one of the most charming nights I ever saw.” She was looking out of the window as she spoke, watching the moonbeams as they glistened on ten thousand points of ice and snow, while the twinkling lights of the factory village, unsteady as fire-flies, but, like them, bright and twinkling, dotted the country in every direction. Mary had

stood at the window a minute when she first came up stairs, but she was blind to the beauty of earth and sky. Nor had she any pleasure now from the moonlight upon the floor. "Do let me sleep," she said to her sister crossly, and turning from even the brightness within, slumbered again.

So heavily did the words which she had heard sink into her memory that the morning did not fail to bring them back to her. Consequently the day was not a happy one, nor was the week that followed. It was a new life for her, this one of discontent and useless complaint, but she rather encouraged the feeling. It made her more and more unhappy, and she was no longer the sunshine of a home which needed all the brightness which it was possible to bring into it.

This feeling had in no degree lessened when the work-hours at the factory were suddenly shortened. It was whispered about that there was very little work. Mary and her companions had more rest at night and less weary bodies, but the food was less, too, and the faces commenced to be care-worn and troubled. There was time for home-duties, but, alas! money was needed more than time, and it did not come. This for a while, and then the hours at the factory were very few. The great bell did not clang out its summons until nine o'clock in the morning, and it seemed like a knell when it sounded again at noon to send them home. Hands were dismissed by twos and threes, and faces commenced to look despairing. One corner of the factory was still always,

and the silence seemed creeping, creeping into everybody's heart. They looked not backward upon more happy days, but forward to poverty and wretchedness. The wood in the shed and the coal in the cellar seemed to diminish fearfully. There were no merry sounds in the village as the evening fell, and each family gathered moodily round the hearth and were warmed by a fire which they knew not how they could replenish.

By and by came a day when the great gates of the factory never moved upon their hinges, and the bell clapper was still, and the faces which gathered about the building were hopeless. Mary was among them, with no brighter look than the rest. Her hands and feet were numb with cold, but there was no open door to

invite her to a warm fire within, while at home the coals were gathered in so small a heap that they had a fearful look. "No work, no work!" was the cry far and near, and haggard faces and anxious eyes saw nothing in the distance but starvation.

Oh, it is pitiful when men and women have to bend every effort of mind and body toward making a very little reach such a long way! More pitiful still when the little grows less constantly, and the house and its inmates show signs of constant hunger and come to wear a half-starved look like wild beasts. Mary lived, she never knew how, to see this growing upon the home faces and feeling it on her own. Then her sister sickened, grew weaker, with nothing to nourish her and the absence of medical care.

Ah, how hard it was to stand and hear her cries with no relief at hand and no money to purchase any ! So hard, so sore, the trials grew, that Mary cowered and shrank under them. At the first, for weeks she trudged every day to the factory doors, to find other patient souls waiting there before closed gates. She gave up at length, partly from hopelessness and partly for the reason that her shoes were worn out, and the constant walking over the cold snow was fearful to the already frost-bitten feet. It was then and afterward that she remained at home and sank down in despair.

In the midst of this there came to them kindly helping hands. The young ladies whom she saw and heard came with gentle words and nourishing food to the starving, suffering

work-people. There was but little which came to one among so many, but there were soothing words and comforts for the sick ; above all, loving care, which went a long way toward relief. Mary saw them almost every day. They came to her sister's bedside with soothing drink and fresh food, and, more blessed still, words of cheer. Her heart, which had grown hard against them at the seeming injustice which gave them wealth when she had none, commenced to soften under the gentle Christian charity. She said nothing, but whereas at the first she would never see them when they came, she was now found every day by the side of her sister when they made their daily visits, and though she spoke but seldom, she grew sorry for her former feeling.

At length there came a day, two, three days, when the ladies did not come. The sister was growing stronger, and the visitors had left some money at the last visit which was still untouched. The cottage was some distance from the village, and the snow had fallen again heavily, so there was sufficient excuse for their absence. Still it was not like them to be detained by a storm, and there was no one in the little cottage who did not miss them sadly.

It grew urgent that some one should go to the village for food, for all that was in the house was exhausted. Mary seeing no other alternative, drew some old woollen stockings over her worn shoes, and very reluctantly taking the money which had been given them, and a basket, stepped out of the house and

walked toward the village for the first time in weeks.

It was after sunset, but she kept her eyes steadily fixed upon the ground, and her face, sharpened with hunger and soured from trouble, did not move from its one settled expression. She must pass the factory on her way, and she dreaded it. It seemed like an evil spirit, with its closed doors and black windows, its heavy gate, upon which the hinges had grown rusty, and the silence which was like death. She knew without looking up what corner she was approaching and that it would give her, as she turned, a full view of the great black building, upon which starvation seemed to be written in such staring capitals.

She turned it suddenly at last, and a full burst of light greeted her, with

a noise of whirling, buzzing wheels. From every window in the great factory the lights were streaming, and the great gates, unlocked and thrown wide open, were crowded with men and teams, even at the evening-time, carrying in heavy loads of cotton. She fell on her knees in the fresh, white snow and cried aloud: "Oh what is this I see?"

"Work, girl, steady work!" answered a man, cheerily, running by her on the snow and hastening into the factory. She knelt a moment longer, struggling for composure, and then, following the man's steps, rushed into the factory, up the rough staircase, through the brightly-lighted room, and not stopping for the joyous words which greeted her on every hand, went dashing on to her own

loom. Once there she threw her bonnet and shawl aside and set the busy shuttle flying.

Oh how they worked! Oh what music the clatter and din made for them! Oh how the tired hearts bounded and the idle fingers flew! They never worked so well; God grant that they may never work so again, for the movements were those of starving people, and the faces that watched the busy looms were desperate. The flying shuttles sang "food for those at home," and the hum of machinery was the return of better days. On and on flew the wheels, on and on the busy hands guided the shuttles, until the moon rose in the sky and the daylight was long gone. Then they departed only for a short time, until early morning, and carried with them

light hearts, quick steps and words of cheerful greeting.

Mary, too, came at last, stepping out of the lighted building into just such a night as the one she now so distinctly remembered, when, amidst plenty of work and no care at home, she had angrily cried out against her fate. "O God, forgive me!" she said now, raising her clasped hand to heaven. "I was unthankful and wrong, but I will never be so again. Bless those kind and gentle hands that have ministered to us in our need! May they never know the anguish of the starving, and may I live in true contentment, thankfully glad of all the joy the dear Lord sends to me!"

She dropped her hands and looked about her. With another upward

glance of gratitude, she murmured :
“Daylight gone, a new moon in a
clear evening sky, crisp, crackling
snow under my feet, the blessed factory
lights gleaming like stars through the
night, and myself going homeward to
carry joy and hope to those awaiting
me. God has given me a moment of
true happiness.”



II.

A Precious Pearl may have a Plain Setting.

II.

A PRECIOUS PEARL MAY HAVE A PLAIN SETTING.

AND, mamma, we are to have a grand sleigh-ride—four horses, a sleigh large enough to seat thirty of us, with buffalo robes and jingling bells, and a supper at the Bald Eagle. And teacher said mittens and hot bricks, and I want both pairs—the red and white tops and the all-white ones.”

Such a hurry and excitement as the little girl was in! She ran in and out of the cold air, and finding her mother, rattled away to her as I have told you, never giving herself time to stop and

think or breathe until her story was all told. Then she dropped down on a stool with a little "Oh!" of pure weariness.

Her mother laughed. "As much as I can gather from what you are so eager to tell," said she, "is that the school is going sleigh-riding, and my daughter wishes to be one of the party. But what do you want with two pairs of mittens? You are not thinking of wearing both at once, I hope?"

"No, mamma, no; only I was in such a hurry that I mixed it all up. I wanted to ask you if I might give one pair of mittens to Ada Wallace?"

"Give them to Ada? What for?"

"Why, mamma, she is the only girl who does not wear them, and I know it is because her father is so poor. When the teacher told us to be

sure and wear our mittens she looked down so pitifully at her two hands, which are red and swollen, and her face looked as though she did not mean to go. May she not have one pair?"

"Certainly, Winnie; only are you sure she would like to take them if you offered?"

"Of course, mamma, I shall not give them to her as if it was anything, for it isn't, you know; and so she would be happy without knowing what made her so."

"That's a good thought, Winnie dear. Now hang up your hood and go and wash your hands, for the clock is striking, and I fear the tea-bell will ring before you are ready for it."

Her mother had no fear that Winnie would fail in the bestowal of her

gift, or in any other good deed of this kind. She seemed to love to do good continually, and always in a delicate, lovely way which made her a favorite everywhere.

Thirty very happy girls were gathered about the stove in the school-room on the day before New Year's, waiting for the sleigh. So many red hoods and shawls, such a bundle of furs and wrappings, it seemed after you unrolled some little girl that she was very small compared with her size when she was well wrapped up. So sparkling and bright they were, and so restless, moving about among each other, laughing and talking, that they appeared like a field of gay poppies nodding in the wind. Winnie was there looking as bright and sparkling as the rest, bundled up in a big warm

shawl of her mother's, with the white mittens on her hands and the red-and-white ones in her pocket. Her friend had not yet arrived, so she busied herself with two bricks which were on the stove heating, moving them here and there as she found room, fancying that an inch or so nearer the coals would make a wonderful difference in the warmth.

When at length Ada came in, they were caught away very quickly (much to the joy of somebody else who had bricks to heat) and wrapped in paper and woollen. Taking her warm bundle on her arm, she moved in and out among the waiting groups until she came to the place where her friend sat with her hands underneath her shawl.

“Good-morning, Ada,” she said;

"isn't this a lovely day for our ride? I feel as if I could scarcely wait for the sleigh to come."

"Yes, it's a beautiful day," replied Ada, brightly; "but what a grown-up girl you are in all those wrappings!"

"Yes, even down to my mittens," laughed Winnie, in answer, putting out her two worsted-covered hands. "You know teacher said we must remember to wear them. Have you a pair on?"

"No," replied Ada, shortly, drawing her hands a little closer beneath her shawl.

"Well, now, how nice that is! I've got two pair—these and the red-and-white ones in my pocket. It just comes handy, don't it?" she said, laughing, and pulling them out she threw them into Ada's lap, exclaiming

as she did so, "I do believe I hear the bells. I must look out of the window."

It was the bells she had heard, and in the confused five minutes which followed there was no time for either explanation or refusal, but as Ada climbed up into the sleigh, Winnie, who sat at the end of the step—for it was arranged omnibus-fashion—saw, as her friend's hands were stretched out to catch at something for a support, that they were covered with red-and-white mittens.

There was room enough for one between Winnie and her next neighbor, so she motioned to her friend to come and sit beside her. Ada came directly, and whispered in an undertone as she sat down: "I ought not to have taken the mittens; but they looked so pretty

and warm that I could not help it. It was very kind in you to lend them to me."

"Not much kindness about it," replied Winnie, shaking her curly head. "They would not have been of any use in my pocket, and they look so well where they are."

Ada would never know that this had all been planned for her comfort, and so she enjoyed it the more. For Winnie's part, if she felt at all that she had done a kind act, it was only with a wish that she had more to give where God had given her so much. But the little things go toward making up the great things.

This is the way God gives to us. Seeing always something for us to enjoy, he heaps mercies upon us in his great bountifulness.

It was nothing but pleasure to be abroad in the cold, frosty air. To hear the snow, trodden under the springing feet of the horses, crunch with that dry, cold sound which it has on clear winter days, and to hear the many bells jingle, jingle, jingle, until they brought all the dwellers in the houses which they passed out at their front doors, where they stood smiling, glad with the joy of somebody else, hugging themselves close with the cold, and looking after the sleigh as long as they could see it.

It was something pretty to see the great sleigh full of bright, joyous faces, and the shouts and hurrahs were worth hearing. They took special delight in putting themselves in an uproar when they passed the home of any one of their companions, and

when they came opposite the teacher's house they called to the driver to stop, and then shouted until they brought their teacher's old mother to the door. She looked out at them through her spectacles and said :

“Bless the children ! I wish I had some warm doughnuts for them.”

Then away from the town, out among the hills and fields all covered over with the same pure, white mantle, through woods where the leaves rustled in myriads of soft voices in the summer. The north wind had taken up his abode in their tops, and his solemn music was all in and out among their branches. The ever-greens were still, because they bore a white burden as well as the earth, and the piled-up snow upon the dark green branches had so beautiful an effect that

the trees seemed to know it and stand quite still to be admired or to move just gracefully enough to call attention to their beauty.

Winnie was in a wonderfully comfortable and happy state of mind watching all this, but she feared occasionally that her companion was not so happy. As she turned to her with a question or bright remark, she often found her friend sober, although she always replied smilingly. Winnie wondered if she were cold, and strongly suspecting this to be the case, tried to think of something to make her more comfortable. Winnie's place, as I have said, was at the end of a long seat, which ran down the side of the sleigh, so that she had the protection of the wood at the lower corner. There was another seat up and down through

the middle and a third on the other side.

"Ada," she said, suddenly, to her friend, "I wish you would change seats with me!"

"What for? Are you not comfortable?"

"Oh yes, but I would like a change if you will be so good as to take my seat for a little while." They changed accordingly, and Ada leaned back in the corner, sheltering herself effectually from the wind.

"Why what a warm corner!" she exclaimed.

"Do you find it comfortable? I'm very glad. Now if you will please push my bricks over to me with your feet, I will give you yours in the same way."

"Here they are," replied Ada, hur-

riedly; "do not look for mine. I haven't any."

"None?" exclaimed Winnie. "Oh how cold your feet must be! There! do not push them any farther. Put your feet on one half; mine are quite warm, so I will just touch them."

"No, no, Winnie," cried Ada, "I do not want to take your bricks. Let me push them over farther."

"I will not touch my toes to them if you do," replied Winnie, laughing. "See, there is plenty of room;" and she pushed aside the robe to show her, bidding her put her feet on. She did so then, and Winnie let the robe fall very quickly. Such thin shoes as she had seen! Summer shoes on a cold winter day! There were two or three big tears in her eyes, and she winked and blinked several minutes

before they would go away. She was very much rejoiced that she had given up the corner seat, and she turned over and over in her brain some way of giving further comfort.

Ada for her part could not help seeing and knowing how much was done for her comfort, and she was very grateful. Yet she could not thank Winnie. All the little acts of kindness were performed in a quiet way which left no room for thanks. She knew when she leaned back in the corner and found it so warm that her comfort had been the cause of the change of seats. Yet the thinking of it only added to her happiness, because it had been done so gladly.

All this time they were skimming along through the glorious hill country, winding up the steep, smooth roads,

the bells and the horses' feet keeping perfect time, and the children's eyes eagerly watching for the top. Once there they paused a moment to take in as much—or as little as they could in so short a time—of the magnificence of a broad country covered with freshly-fallen snow. The farm-houses which dotted the country far and wide were little brown spots in all this brightness and purity, and the paths about them were as many more brown lines.

It was near the winter sunset, and often the smoke from a fresh fire was curling out of a farm-house chimney, touched as it came by the last rays of the sun, and so rolling up in a cloud of glory. Once, too, they all exclaimed at a sight, far in the valley, of a blacksmith's fire flashing in the now growing twilight, and the

bright streams of light thrown out from it upon the glistening snow, made it seem like an enchanted place. Then leaving the hills behind them, they would fly down into the valleys, making the woods ring with their shouts and laughter. Even the horses seemed to enter into the spirit of the fun, holding up their heads and prancing so as to make every separate bell peal with a tiny cry of pleasure.

The daylight was all gone when they rode up to the door of the Bald Eagle, a good, old-fashioned country hotel, where they were to take supper. They were expected, for the front windows all showed bright lights within, and while the hostler took charge of the horses the landlord came to help them out.

“Why, here is an army of little

folks," said he. "I hope you are not too hungry."

"Oh yes, sir, we are very hungry," said Winnie as he helped her down.

"Run into the house, then, and see if you can see anything to eat," he replied.

Winnie had her bundle of bricks under her arms, but instead of running into the warm parlor where the rest were, she went along through the dining-room into the kitchen.

"Laws! See dis chile!" said one of the cooks, pausing in her work. Her exclamation drew other eyes quickly in her direction.

"Honey, what does she want?" said an old colored cook, smiling all over her face as she approached her.

"I want to know whether you will please put my bricks on your stove to

warm while I am at supper, and whether you will wrap them up separately when they are hot.

“With the greatest of pleasure, honey,” returned the woman, taking her bricks and placing them on the red-hot top of the stove.

Winnie thanked her earnestly, and returned as fast as she could to the parlor, where the scholars were rubbing their hands and stamping their feet and exclaiming about the cold. So few moments had she been away that she had not been missed, and now, joining a group, she was merry with the rest.

I think warm bread and milk, with pie and doughnuts, never tasted better than they did that night. There were bright words, merry laughter, kind feeling and good will among them all,

and hungry as they were they were not selfish, and when they gathered about the stove again, preparatory to their ride home, there were none but pleasant faces. When the horses were brought out again, Winnie ran away for her two bundles, which she found nicely wrapped and ready, with a paper bag full of warm doughnuts laid on top.

“Oh, who is this for?” she asked as she lifted the bag.

“Them doughnuts,” returned the old cook, “is for the pretty-spoken young lady who owns them two bricks. If you find her out there, send her in after them.”

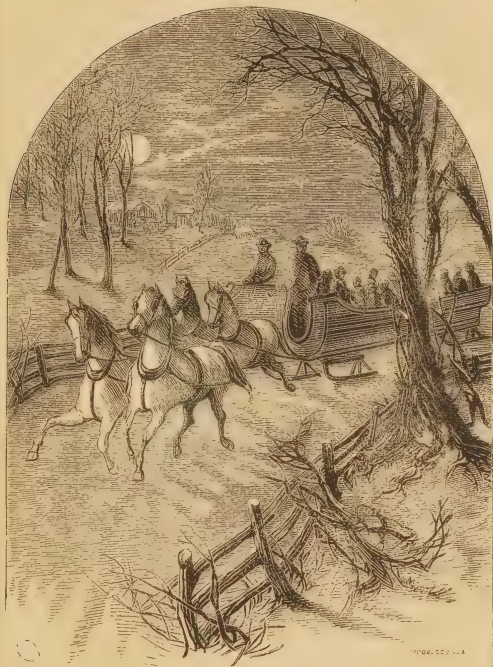
Winnie laughed. “I think it must be me,” she said, “for the bricks are mine, and you are very kind to think so well of me. Good-night to you all.”

Away she ran again just in time to follow the rest out to the big sleigh. As she sat down beside Ada she said, quietly :

“ Here is your brick. I have had them both heated at the kitchen fire, and in this bag are some doughnuts the cook gave me. We will eat them by and by to warm ourselves.”

Off they went back again in the bright moonlight this time, for while they were at supper the moon had climbed up out of the east, and was now shining full and bright over the snow. It was greeted by the children with great glee. The return ride, however, was not so full of cheers or so boisterous as the same journey two hours before. They sang now bright school-songs or solemn hymns, which rang out on the night air, echoing and re-echoing

2516,



THE SLEIGH RIDE.

among the hills. As they dashed along they saw eager faces looking out at them from the lighted windows of some farmer's dwelling, or a door suddenly opened and a group of people crowded about to look after the gay riders, whose music continued to sound back to them faintly long after the sleigh was out of sight. Ada sat back in the corner of the sleigh—hers again during the ride home—and, with Winnie's mittens on her hands and warm bricks at her feet, was comfortable and happy, and her heart swelled with gratitude toward her little friend, who so quietly, yet so completely, had ministered to her comfort. She thought of her sick brother at home, whose disease had kept him so long from pleasure, and she could not help wishing that he might feel some of Winnie's

kindness. And yet it was in such quiet ways that it showed itself that she knew not half the time when it came.

“What are you thinking about, Ada?” her friend demanded suddenly, turning to her more silent companion. “You are comfortable, are you not?”

“Yes, comfortable and happy. I was thinking of your kindness, and afterward of my brother Will. You know I told you about him.”

“Yes, I remember. But although I know you are thinking how much you would like to have him enjoy all this, yet I recollect you said he loved the Lord Jesus, and I think, if he loves him very much, he is quite as happy in his pain as you and I ever thought of being.”

"Yet you are a Christian too, Winnie, are you not?"

"I try to be a little like my Saviour," she returned, "and he has promised to help us when we try, you know."

"Yes," she said aloud; but she thought in her heart, "If loving Christ will make me as kind and unselfish as Winnie, and as patient and loving as Willie, I will love him right away and beg him to be my guide."

The sleigh came rushing and dashing into the town with the shaking of bells, the prancing of hoofs and the sound of merry voices. They rode around to the different houses, dropping a girl here, a girl there, two sisters at one place and two at another. By and by they stopped at a low cottage, at the one lighted window of which a little wan face looked out.

Good-night, Winnie," said Ada, grasping her friend's hand, adding low, "I will bring the mittens to school on Monday morning. You have made my ride happy."

"Good-night, Ada," was the eager reply. "The mittens are yours, dear, and this bundle of doughnuts is for Willie. Tell him I am sorry he could not go with us, but I am coming to see him to-morrow, with a new story-book and some sweet oranges for him to enjoy."

So the sleigh dashed on, leaving happy children behind, as the summer flies away and leaves us happy remembrances of sunny days. By and by, among the last of the merry company, Winnie was put down, safe and sound, at her own door.

"Did you have a good time, Winnie

dear?" asked her mother, unfastening her wrappings.

"Yes, mamma, I had a lovely time."

"If Winnie has had what she calls 'a lovely time,' she has been doing some good," said her father.

She stood a few moments gravely thinking over his remark, and then replied:

"No, papa, I do not think I ever do good. I think it is the spirit of the Lord Jesus. You know he never let an opportunity pass where he could do good, and so his spirit working in me makes me do all these things. Say the next time, 'I think the Lord Jesus has been "going about" with Winnie to-day.'"

So this little girl went to sleep thinking of her own failings and Christ's great love. And Ada, looking

over her day's pleasure, said her evening prayer with a feeling of deeper love toward the Master whose servant Winnie was, while her little suffering brother, with the bag of doughnuts and a promise of a new book and sweet oranges, thought: "It must be a child of Jesus who will do all this for me."

Little things, you say! Oh, the world is full of little things. When our Lord spake in parables, it was not always, nor often, of kings and nobles. but of a lost sheep, a little leaven, the birds of the air, the flowers of the field, a woman with a lost piece of money, a grain of mustard-seed. Small things! It is the little children that enter the kingdom. It was he who made his disciple to say: "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!"

Oh, then, if our blessed Master will but use us to serve him in little things, let us count it great honor, for it is following in his steps!



III.

In Everything Give Thanks.

III.

IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS.

JIMMY was very disconsolate as he sat on the low wooden doorstep of his home. His two elbows were resting on his two knees and his head was in his two hands, while his eyes never raised themselves from their steady gaze upon a little cracked flag in the pavement before him.

“I wonder,” he said to himself, “what mother finds to thank God for? I had only a crust for breakfast this morning, and yet she said, ‘Let us thank God, Jimmy.’ I tried to, but I couldn’t, and now I am hungry and

cold, and it would be wicked to say what I do not feel."

Just then a voice called him from within, and jumping up hastily, he ran into a dark, dismal room from which the door opened upon the steps on which he had been seated. His mother sat in a chair, hovering over a few coals, which she now and then stirred in order to procure warmth from them, whilst a ragged shawl drawn closely about her shoulders showed that the heat was insufficient to keep out the cold air. It was she who had called her son, and as he came up she drew aside a blanket which lay upon her lap, and he saw his baby-brother lying there unconscious of want and cold, sound asleep.

"Jimmy, you must be father and brother both to little brother now that

papa is in heaven," said the mother, softly, "and so I must send you out a little while to beg some food for us. I do not like you to go into the wicked, noisy streets, and I do not like to have you beg, but there is no other way ; so before you go kneel down here by my side, and let me ask God to take care of my son and keep him from doing wrong."

So Jimmy knelt, and his mother prayed that he might be delivered from evil and be helped in seeking food for them. "O God!" she said, "I thank thee for making Jimmy a dutiful son, and may he and I always thank thee for everything."

"Mamma," said Jimmy, rising as she finished and standing beside her, "I cannot thank God. I have lost my father, I am cold at night and have

nothing to eat. I have nothing to thank God for."

"Oh, Jimmy," answered his mother, "if it were not for God's care, we should be in the streets now with no roof to cover us. He is raising up kind friends for us somewhere. Trust him, and wherever you are to-day remember him and thank him for his goodness."

But the boy's face was unhappy and anxious, and he left the room with the tears standing in his blue eyes, partly at his own misery and partly on account of a heavy sigh from his mother, which he knew showed her to be very sorrowful. So he felt farther than ever from thanksgiving, and walked away into the busy street without hope.

The morning was very dismal. He

tried to beg at the gates of fine houses, but it seemed to him that he was more denied than usual, and when the great town-clock struck twelve, he had so very little in the bottom of his basket that he felt ashamed to go home with it. When he thought of his waiting mother, the big sobs came up in his throat and almost choked him. He crept into the shadows of the great church and listened to the striking of the bell. It seemed always saying: "It is noon! Thank God!" "It is noon! Thank God!" He followed the slow-dropping words until the bell stopped, and then, with their echo still in his mind, stepped out again among the throng.

How tired and hungry he was! How his toes, peeping through thin shoes, ached until they were numb with cold!

How the fingers held themselves tightly clenched, one against the other, to keep the cold air away! How good the dinners smelt everywhere! How the men who passed him went hurriedly on to other dinners waiting for them somewhere! Even a poor little newsboy had laid down his papers on a corner step, and was opening a nice bundle of bread and cheese, which showed marks of a careful mother's hand. Everywhere they were content and well fed. All had something for which they might be thankful but this one little Jim, who was to be the support of mother and baby-brother. He felt for one moment as grown-up people feel when it seems as if all the world and God too had forsaken them.

God never does forsake his children.

Just then the merciful guidance, which seems far away, came close to him. "God never wounds with both hands." A little match-seller, one of Jim's playmates, stepped directly in front of him, with a face full of good-humor and heartiness.

"How are you, old boy? Where have you been all day?" he asked.

It was no use. The bad feelings struggling in Jim's heart could not find utterance to this sunny-faced boy.

"I've been trying to get something to eat," he replied, with an effort to choke down the feelings which started tears in his eyes, and uncovering his almost empty basket for the inspection of his companion.

"It's a mean shame!" said the boy, his heart touched, but unwilling to show it. "Rich folks don't know how

poor ones have to suffer. I've an apple here which the old woman who keeps stand at the corner gave me. Come and sit down on the step in the sun and eat it."

So the two boys sat down on the lowest step of a flight made of pure marble, which ascended to the door of one who would never feel hunger he could not satisfy, and never know what it was to have his dear ones cold at home. Jim took the apple because he was so hungry and he knew his friend was not. He ate it, and his friend sat by watching, knitting his brows now and then, and poking vigorously at the bricks in front of him with a small stick he carried.

"How is your mother?" he asked, suddenly turning upon his friend who sat munching his apple.

"She is cold," replied Jim, stopping his eating, and a look of distress coming into his face again.

"Of course she is," returned the other, vexed with himself for having asked the question, "everybody is to-day, so go on eating your apple. Your mother will have a good fire soon." He looked more puzzled than ever after this remark, as if he were trying to find out where the fire was coming from. He walked about uneasily until Jim had eaten up his apple, core and all.

"The baby is well?" he asked, suddenly stopping his walk.

"The baby is well, but it won't be so long," returned Jim. "Mother says I am the support of the family, but if this keeps on long they won't want any support—they'll be dead."

The despair was getting the upper hand again, and his friend, in perplexity, sat down beside him and said not a word for full five minutes. At the end of that time he sprang to his feet and gazed first at the door-bell of the house upon the steps of which they were sitting, and then all up and down the front. At the lower windows the shutters were thrown open and the heavily-parted curtains showed a gentleman seated in the recess reading very diligently. The stick came down on the pavement very energetically, and he ran back to Jim.

“Old fellow, we must be going soon,” he said, “if we are to make our fortunes before we grow up. Why, won’t you sing something to warm yourself by? It will be as good as a fire to both you and me.”

Jim hesitated. He felt very little like singing just then, though singing was his delight. People don't sing when they are miserable, however much the books may say they do. But he thought of the apple and the good cheer his friend had tried to impart, so he could not refuse. Then what should he sing? He had a store of street songs, caught up here and there and everywhere, and consequently a very curious mixture of nonsense and pathos. Then he had a wonderful store of hymns, sung to him when the mother's heart had stilled itself with the words she uttered. His choice lay between these two classes, and something inside said: "Sing a jolly song. It will make you feel better." Suddenly then his mother's voice in the morning, and the old

clock's noon chiming, came back to his mind, and without stopping he commenced to sing an old hymn, trite with long utterance, but framed about to all loving minds with a bower of clustered blessings, half-open buds of promise, and full-blown roses of fulfilled desires :

“I thank the goodness and the grace
That on my birth has smiled,
And made me in these latter days
A happy Christian child.”

A clear, rich voice it was that gave the solemn words their full force, and a tone caught from the one who taught him them. His friend listened with his face half turned toward the house. When the first verse was finished, he said quickly : “That is good. Go on.” Jim hesitated a moment and then commenced again :

"I was not born, as thousands are,
Where God is never known,
And taught to pray a useless prayer
To blocks of wood and stone."

He had not gone far in the verse when the lower window of the house was raised a little, the gentleman's book laid down and his ear applied to the crack.

"Go on," said his friend, excitedly, with a side glance at the window, as Jim stopped a second time. "More of the same sort." So Jim, not recalling more of the hymn, took up another, and sang:

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, angelic host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost."

No one sings this without entering into the spirit of it before he is through—or so it seems to me—and

Jim, forgetting street and people, hunger and cold and sorrow, poured his soul into the music and the utterance, until his voice rose rich and powerful in its freedom and strength.

Before he had finished, the door had opened behind him and his friend had sprung up and taken off his hat, with a low exclamation of satisfaction, and was bowing to the gentleman who stood in the doorway. Jim was singing without looking up, so he continued, and the gentleman put his finger on his lip, signing to the other pleased listener that he must not interrupt him. So when he at length finished his song and raised his eyes he found that he had an audience.

“Come into the house, both of you,” said the gentleman, smiling at the boy’s astonished face. “I want you

to sing for me here inside, away from the noise."

"Come on, Jim," said his friend, with pleased eyes, as he mounted quickly in advance the long flight of steps, Jim following in a maze. They were led into the room the gentleman had quitted, soft, elegant, luxurious and warm—oh, so warm to the cold hands and feet! The gentleman crossed it quickly, and opening a piano at the farther end called the boy to him.

"Now," he said to Jim, "I called you in because I want to hear you sing. Will you sing for me again?"

"Yes, sir, certainly," said Jim, turning his cap over and over in his confusion, "but I am no singer."

"Very well," said the gentleman, smiling again. "And your friend, what part does he take?"

"I generally clap and stamp and say 'good boy,'" replied the boy with the round face and happy eyes.

The gentleman laughed very much, and saying that he had a good part, turned to the piano and struck a few chords.

"Tell me a little hymn that you can sing?" he asked of Jim, running over the keys with his fingers. Jim could scarcely lift his eyes from the white, swift-moving hands to tell him, but when he had done so he stood spell-bound, as, touching white and black here and there, the air he had named came softly and sweetly sounding out upon the silence. "Now sing," he said, as the notes died away and he struck the opening cord anew. Jim caught his suspended breath and sung. Two, three, four hymns he sung, one

after the other, accompanying the sweet instrument, while his friend, sitting stiffly in a gorgeous chair by the fire, although he neither clapped nor said "good boy," showed by the increased good humor and cheeriness of his laughing face how satisfied he was with Jim's performance. Finally the gentleman turned round and examined the singer.

"You are a poor boy, I see," he said.

"I am so poor that I have to beg, sir," answered Jim.

"Poor and a beggar boy," repeated the gentleman; "and you wonder sometimes what God made you for, if you were to be miserable all your life. When God made you, Jim, he may not have given you riches, but he gave you one gift—a glorious voice—and

that is something to be thankful for every day. I am training a class of boys to sing sweet Christian hymns. Come and sing with them, and we will go about telling all men, through our song-words, what Christ has done for men. I will have a new suit of clothes ready for you when you come to me, and two bright new dollars every week. Here is one to commence with;" and he held out a tiny gold piece.

The boy clutched it and folded both his hands tightly upon it. "Oh, Neddy," he said, "think of mother and the baby!" and for the first time he broke down utterly and sobbed.

"What about mother and the baby?" asked the astonished musician.

"Mother and baby are cold and hungry," cried the boy, "but this is food and fire. I must go, sir, to

warm and feed them, for I am their only dependence, and I have thought to-day that they would die depending on my aid."

"Good boy! Good boy!" cried Neddy, clapping this time and laughing, with the tears in both his eyes.

"I'll go with you," said the musician. So the three set off, not straight to the little cottage. They turned aside for wood and bread and tea and meat, but the gold piece was not broken. Not out of Jim's mite came the payment, but from a well-filled purse, whose owner's heart was full. They came there at last, and Jimmy, rushing in, threw down all his bundles and flinging himself into his mother's arms, cried to her:

"Mother, let us thank God always and for everything! For these good

things, for my gold dollar, for music, for this kind friend, for Neddy, and, above all, for His watchful care who sends them all."

The mother prayed a few broken words of thanks, because her heart was full, but God filled up the spaces, and took the prayer as from hearts full of his praise. And the two tears, which had been standing in Neddy's eyes, dropped when he said "Amen."



IV.

God is his own Interpreter.

IV.

GOD IS HIS OWN INTERPRETER.

HUBERT DOYLE threw his palette and brush down beside his canvas and knelt by his mother's chair, with his head resting on her shoulder, and a face full of disappointment and trouble. His mother's anxious hand passed over his shining hair backward and forward, as if she longed to do something to take his trial away.

"Hubert dear, if I could only help you, I should not need to say how gladly I would do so," she said, soothingly.

"Oh yes, mother," replied the lad,

hopelessly ; “it is only money I want, and neither you nor I have any of that.” Then leaving his place, he stepped out in front of the half-finished picture. It was very brilliant in color. There was a grouping of full-length figures in gorgeous robes of purple and scarlet, a spacious hall with half-finished draperies of crimson about the walls and steps, and a carpeted platform ascending to a chair of state, also unfinished. It was something very grand and gorgeous, in Hubert’s eyes particularly—more so perhaps in his eyes than in those of any one else.

“There it is, mother,” he said, trembling all over in the very intensity of his sorrow, “and there it will remain and never be placed on exhibition at the academy, as I so hoped

and intended it should be. All I lack is the crimson and the scarlet, and these I cannot buy. I have quantities of greens and browns, but they will not answer for these draperies. Oh, mother, think that for the want of a little money my picture must remain unfinished and my work perish!"

"I hope not, Hubert," replied his sympathizing mother, drawing him down to his old position by her side. "If every great man had given up his life-work at the first discouragement, there would have been very little progress made in this world. Keep your courage up. I trust there will be some money to help you some day, and perhaps you may sell a picture; who knows? Besides," she added in a lower tone, "you must trust God. If he has given you this work to do,

he will see that you are successful. When you are tried, remember the words of that grand old hymn :

‘God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain.’ ”

She stopped a moment, and hearing no reply, asked : “ What did Professor Paul say to your painting the other day when he called to see it ? ”

“ He did not say much, mother. He seldom does. Suggested soberer coloring or something, but you know it was not finished. How could he or any one else know what it was going to look like ? ”

His mother said no more, but sat for some minutes looking from the painting to her son’s woe-begone face. Then sadly and with a heavy sigh she rose slowly and left the painting-room.

Hubert, impatient under the chains poverty had thrown around him, walked backward and forward between his easel and the window, looking neither at the one nor out of the other, but striving to bear his burden and to pluck up fresh courage. Presently, feeling as if the closeness of the house were stifling him, he seized his hat and ran down the stairs and out into the street. His mother heard him go, and sighed anew.

He hardly knew where he went or whether he had any object, unless it were to leave sights and sounds, people and noises, behind him, and reach some place where he could be alone. So it was that he found himself at last on the top of a breezy hill which overlooked the glorious country. He sat down under a tree, and without look-

ing about him, buried his face in his hands and tried to think. It was rather a vain effort, but he did not change his position for a long time, not until he was roused by a peal of thunder very near him, and looking up, found black clouds over his head out of which the rain was commencing to pour in torrents and from which the lightnings were flashing and the thunder rolling.

He sprang to his feet and took refuge in a rude lumberman's shed, close at hand, where he had the pleasure of sitting for half an hour, watching the trees bend with the violence of the storm and the water drip, drip, drip, from the doorway of his shelter. If he had cared for anything, he would have been impatient and irritable, but he had allowed himself to sink into

such a state of hopeless indifference that he watched the rain-drops as if there were nothing else in the wide world for him to do. He did not even perceive that the rain had ceased, until the sun, striking through the trees into the doorway, told him that the storm had passed away.

He stepped out quickly to the top of the hill where he had been before, and then his artist-eyes were caught and held by a picture of rare beauty. Down in the valley beneath him stood a little brown farm-house, with out-buildings picturesquely grouped about it, and a fine old orchard of apple and cherry trees close at hand. Out of the chimney of the house the smoke was curling slowly, and about the doorway were grouped four or five children, whose voices just reached his ear.

Close about the house lay meadows green and fresh and smooth, and by a laughing brook in one of these stood two cows waiting patiently to be driven homeward. But the beauty of it all was the effect of the shower. The old house looked brightened and cleansed, the children's voices had a clearer ring, every single grass blade seemed astir with new life and greenness, and the buttercups were lifting their golden heads, as if they were ready to show their gratitude for being thus freshened and purified. The old cows were snuffing the cooling air and lowing contentedly, and the waters of the brook dashed along with a song of rejoicing and a dance of merriment which it was good to hear. Each and all of these—house, curling smoke, children, meadows, cows and brook—

were touched by the sun, now near its setting, and glorified by it, while in the east was a faint rainbow, lost in the centre of the arch, but one side meeting the horizon with its mellow tints.

Hubert, standing where the fresh breeze swept his face and blew away the sadness gathered there, brought his hands together with an exclamation of delight.

“I never saw anything so fresh and beautiful in all my life,” he said aloud. “I’ve plenty of greens and browns. I’ll go home and paint it!”

Down the hill he rushed, with the vision still in his mind, through the high road to the town, and from thence with eager feet to his own home. Springing up the stair-case to his little painting-room, he drew his

famous painting from the easel, and without giving himself a moment's time for further regret, placed a new canvas where it had been, and drawing aside the curtains to let all the remaining daylight in, he commenced sketching rapidly.

His mother heard his step on the stair, and finding it as rapid as ever—even more so than when he went out—feared to enter the studio lest she should find her boy hopeless and desponding. By and by, however, when the toast was hot and the tea steeped, she timidly opened the door, to find him absorbed before a fresh canvas and painting by the last gleam of daylight.

“Why, Hubert, my son,” she exclaimed, surprised to find him eager and excited, “what are you doing?”

“ I’m painting, mother,” he replied, turning toward her with a face filled with the enthusiasm and delight of his work. “ But I have used up all the daylight, so I’m ready for supper ; but to-morrow morning early I’ll start again.”

“ What are you painting ?” asked the pleased mother.

“ Why, mother,” he replied, stopping to laugh, “ I don’t know what it is unless it is rain. I’ve greens and browns, and that is all that is required, except a tiny spot of scarlet for the child’s dress, and I can manage that.”

He had not the faintest idea how unintelligible his reply was, but his mother did not care very much so long as he was happy, and she led him out to supper with a load lifted from her heart.

It never fell again. If ever there was a happy heart, it was Hubert's during those weeks before the exhibition. With the scene ever in his mind he went on painting, and, as the colors took their places on the canvas, he seemed to stand again upon the hill-top and to feel the freshness all about him. His zeal never abated, not for a moment. He worked diligently and untiringly, and his mother would say, when she felt warm and tired, that the sight of the fresh grass and the rainy look about the picture would seem to clear the air all around her. In her heart of hearts she liked the picture much better than the gorgeous affair with its face against the wall, although she never said as much to Hubert. He wanted to call in Professor Paul to see the new painting,

but his mother said wait until it was finished.

When, at last, in time for the exhibition, it was done, Hubert went after Professor Paul to come and see his picture packed away in its traveling dress; but the professor had gone himself with some of his own work to the great city where the exhibition was to be held, and hence his judgment could not be obtained.

For three whole days Hubert waited in anxious suspense for some word from the critics of the exhibition, to whom he had submitted his work. Sometimes he would turn his large painting around and look at it a while to teach himself to expect disappointment, and again, going out of the house, he would climb to the breezy hill-top, which never looked again as

it had done on that one afternoon, and there sit hour after hour.

Finally there came a note. How Hubert's hand trembled when he broke the seal! It was very short, but long enough even for the young artist:

HUBERT DOYLE:

Your picture entitled "Rain in Summer" is received by the Committee and approved. It will be hung at the coming exhibition. Enclosed please find a season ticket for the same.

Yours, &c.,

* * * * for the Committee.

How Hubert's mother managed to procure the money with which she and her boy set off to the exhibition was best known to herself. Sufficient that she did it, and never was lad happier than Hubert when he ran up the mar-

ble steps of the building where the exhibition was being held.

“The finest paintings are in the right-hand gallery, sir,” said the usher.

“Ah, mother, don’t go there,” cried Hubert, nervous and trembling, seizing her hand; “it will be here at the left hand.”

So they turned that way, and in vain did their eyes search every nook and corner of the gallery for the rain picture. It was not there. The rooms were crowded with spectators, and the mother and son forced themselves in and out among them in a way which might have been noticed, but that the object which brought the people there took their eyes away from everything but the paintings.

Finally they passed from the left-hand gallery and turned toward the

other one. A cry of unselfish pleasure burst from Hubert's lips as he beheld the beautiful works of art gathered from all sources and hanging one above another all about the room.

Around a large historical painting stood three or four gentlemen discussing its merits and demerits, and Hubert paused to listen. But just then they moved aside a little, and one of the party spoke with sudden surprise and pleasure.

"Look!" he cried. "Look! I should know what that was without a name. How fresh the air is! I can smell the rain! Was ever anything so true to life?"

Hubert gave one look, but it was enough. Side by side with the historical picture, the work of one of the first artists of the day, hung "Rain in

Summer." Pale and trembling, the boy seized his mother's hand and sank into a seat. The gentlemen were still lingering round the picture, but Hubert lost, although his mother did not, the numerous remarks of admiration and praise bestowed upon it by the group. The color came back very slowly into the boy's face, and, before he had fairly recovered, a hand was on his shoulder and a voice said:

"Hubert, my friend, you did not show 'Rain in Summer' when you showed scarlet and crimson to me. This is one great picture that you have made, and although so little in size, it has been sold for the big price of two hundred dollars."

"Oh, Professor Paul, it can't be true!" cried the boy, turning his startled face toward his friend.

"But it is true. I just have one quiet talk about you with the gentleman who buys him. I wish you joy, madam," he added, giving his hand to the mother, whose face at that moment was worth seeing.

That night when Hubert came to his mother for his usual good-night word with her, he looked up into her face, and with eyes filled with happy tears, said: "Mother I have learned a lesson. I will always trust to heavenly guidance:

'God is his own interpreter
And he will make it plain.'"



V.

Circumstances alter Cases.

V.

CIRCUMSTANCES ALTER CASES.

THE BABY.

THE children were Charlie and Jenny and
Grace,
And a dear little baby with dimpled pink
face,
That hadn't a name;
'Twas a sin and a shame,
But no one was to blame.

The babe had its cradle, its rattle, its cup,
Every name had been thought of, talked of, given up,
From Eve up to Maud
(The latest abroad);

But some were too long, and some were too short,
Some were pretty enough, but somehow they thought—
Papa and mamma, Charlie, Gracie and Jenny—
That they didn't quite fit. Then of aunts there were
many,

Who hearing a new child had come to the Blisses,
Sent on some sweet dresses, a great many kisses,

A few pretty toys,
And some names (they were boys'),
Forgetful that half of the children are misses.

At the first break of dawning,
One cold winter's morning,
Charlie woke, not by bits
As some children do,
Half his eyes, half his wits:
Charlie woke through and through.
For him sleep was over,
He threw off the cover,
Gave the pillow a fling,
He was Charlie—a king!

He threw up the window, he pushed with boy's might,
And tossed back the blind, then screamed with delight:
"Wake, Gracie! Wake, Jenny! The world is all white!
'Tis white all above, 'tis white all below!
'Tis snow on the ground, and the sky is all snow!"
It was snowing, would snow, had snowed in all tenses,
It had covered the trees, the houses, the fences,
The old leaning posts
Were shrouded like ghosts
The trees looked as if they had gone out to dine;
They were dressed up in white and prinked out so fine,
Their diamonds were hung all over their arms,
They were weighed down with bracelets and hung round
with charms,

And even the fences, moss-covered by time,
Transformed, were poetic and made into rhyme,
 And the elm before
 The old barn door
 For its coronal wore
 An immense Koh-i-noor.
 As the clouds broke away,
 With the growing of day,
· The sun, lazily rising, leaned down on its way,
And spread a rich carpet, all shimmer and blaze.

 The snow was all level,
 Except for the revel
 Of a dear little rabbit,
 Who, according to habit,
 As he went to and fro,
 Had left in the snow
 Two small tiny dots,
 The proof that his thoughts
 Were with children who fling
 The half-eaten thing,
 Be it apple or sweetmeat,
 Right down at his neat feet.

Gracie waked up and rushed to the window's recess,
Then called out to Jenny, who was trying to dress :
"Come, Jenny, come quickly ! don't wait for your
 tire,
The tops of the trees are all glowing with fire !

And the mountains are white, with a delicate blush,
And the brook is asleep—" Here the mother cried

"Hush!

Not so loud, Gracie dear;"

For well she might fear

That the baby would hear,

And wake up too soon her attention to claim—

This dear little baby who hadn't a name.

When breakfast was over papa stood and mused

In a dream-like way, to him all unused;

Then he spoke to mamma. Charlie listened and heard.

Papa spoke very low, Charlie lost not a word.

If the little bee know

In a straight line to go

To make its road short,

Of course Charlie ought!

He ran to his sisters,

Threw out a few whispers,

And each little girl

Flung herself with a whirl

Into curves of delight,

Clapping hands with her might.

Papa had said: "I'll order the sleigh,

And give all the children a drive to-day."

Such a looking for caps!

Such a hunting of wraps!

Such a finding of shoes
That were just fit to use
On a very cold day
When you go out to sleigh !
And when the sleigh came up to the door
Was never so merry a group before !

First Jenny and Grace
Were put into place,
All wrapped in gray robes,
Like ugly adobes ;
Then in went mamma,
And then good papa
Put down on her knees
A bundle, perhaps,
Or a roll, if you please,
Of ribbons and caps
And blankets and shawl ;
And yet 'twas not all
Or bundle or roll,
For out of it stole
A little pink face
Between rows of lace,
Which belonged to no other
Than dear little baby,
Who didn't quite smother
(A wonder, it may be).
Papa got in and took hold of the reins,
And Charlie was told to spare no pains

To wind them all in
With the buffalo skin,
Then to creep in himself at any spare place,
And to make himself small to economize space.

Off started the horses right into the snow ;
Off started the bells, ringing row upon row ;
Off started the baby with baby-like crow !

Down dale and up hill
They went at the will
Of papa's guiding hand
And his tone of command.
The town left behind,
The country they find
Less smooth to behold,
More bitingly cold.

Away out on the hills, where grows the sweet heather,
The wind and the snow had waltzed round together ;

They had raised a commotion
Like the billows of ocean ;
It was plunge in and out,
And the sleigh jumped about,
Now thumping,
Now bumping,
Now jouncing,
Now bouncing,
Now plunging,
Now lunging,

Now verging,
Now surging,
Now creeping,
Now leaping,

A tip, a recover,
Then over and over !
First Charlie went out,
Heels over his head :
He floundered about
In a soft snowy bed ;
Next a motley array
Of limbs somewhat mixed,
With shawls, bonnets and hats
And several hot bricks.

Then up jumped five persons, and each gave a throw
To legs and to arms and to wrappings of snow ;
Each tested two ankles, each felt of two wrists—
No breakage, no straining, no bruises, no twists !
Papa and mamma, Charlie, Jenny and Grace,
All stood up unharmed, all white in the face.

But where was the baby ? Which way did she go ?
In a curve parabolic, all scientists know ;
But mamma, with her quivering motherly nerves,
Didn't think of the laws of natural curves.

They looked into the sleigh,
Then they looked every way ;
And here was a blanket, all edged round with blue,
And next was a sock and a dear little shoe.

Charlie said, with a laugh,
'Twas baby's "autograph"
(Gracie said "epitaph").
They followed the shoe,
As hunters would do,

And next was the coral, with bib lying near,
And next was the baby herself, little dear!

In a soft drift of snow
Lay the baby full low;
Its wrappings were thrust
'Neath the snow's foamy crust,
But its dear little head
Peeped out of its bed,
And its bright little eyes
Looked round with surprise,
And its cheeks all aglow
Gave a tint to the snow.

They shouted all round
When the baby they found;
They called her a pet,
A darling, a dear!
She did not appear
To know what it all meant!
The dear child was content
With the downy repose
She found in the snow's
Soft feathery lap.

Flakes lay on the lace

Of her delicate cap,
And seemed put to trace
A half-expressed line,
One could scarcely divine
Were it nature or art
In which it took part.
All sound and all safe,
A heavenly waif,
She lay in the snows,
A sweet flower that graced
Earth's desolate waste,
And they named her—ROSE!

MARIA MITCHELL.



VI.

One is not so soon Healed as Hurt.

VI.

ONE IS NOT SO SOON HEALED AS HURT.

IN every school, either of boys or girls, there is a head—that is, one scholar who leads in everything—and the general tone of the school depends much upon that one. When this leader, who, although not always the most studious one, is the brightest and quickest, sets an example by word or deed of honesty, respect or obedience, the rest follow on in the same way—some from a desire to please one who is so popular, and others because the right thus shown has charms for them. When in another class the

leader is lawless, an influence just as strong for the wrong will be exerted. Not directly, but with an undertone of ridicule and disrespect and a love of ruling power, he or she leads on to evil, and has many followers.

Of this latter class was Augusta Cleveland. She was not a bad girl, very seldom failed in her tasks or offended her teacher, but she was a favorite with her fellow-pupils, and she knew it and made the most of it. If she patronized a play or game at recess, it was immediately popular, and if her denouncing hand fell upon any new scholar, she might as soon attempt to scale Mont Blanc as to seek to overcome the barriers raised against her.

Had our little heroine, Mollie Mount, known of this before, I think she

could not have raised sufficient courage to enter the school. She was as bright and quick as Augusta, but then she was timid and she did not dress well; and oh, girls, that is the measure by which you judge one another sometimes, and it is such a cruel judgment!

When she entered the room that first morning, holding the hand of one of the under-teachers, the girls, as was their usual custom, looked toward Augusta to see how she would receive the new-comer, and she, knowing that they waited for her judgment, eyed Mollie from head to foot, and then turning to her next neighbor with a mocking smile, which all the girls saw and understood, said: "I wonder if that dress was her mother's or her grandmother's?"

That was all, but it was enough, and if Mollie had known what a force was gathering against her, she would have turned and fled. As it was, the school-room looked bright and pleasant to her, and the young, fresh faces gave her new courage.

In the country school from which she had come she had plenty of firm, honest friends, and she hoped for as many more here; so, when she was led to her seat, which was near that of Augusta, she resolved immediately to be friends with the girls about her.

Augusta had rather liked Mollie's manner as she took her seat, and was watching her, rather relenting from her first judgment, when a slight thing swept Mollie's advantage quite away.

The school opened with Bible reading and prayer. When the chapter

commenced, Augusta's slate and arithmetic came out slyly from her desk, and she ciphered diligently. Mollie's black eyes opened wide with surprise and dismay, and they did not lessen when, as she bowed her head upon the desk during the prayer, she heard the pencil moving rapidly across the slate. Augusta saw the amazed look, and it amused her. She saw also the bowed head and reverent manner, so she wrote on her slate for the inspection of her next neighbor: "We are pious." To this came an answer written underneath: "So I see. That sort of thing will not do here."

Poor Mollie! But she, unconscious of her downfall, spent the morning very happily. At recess, finding some error in her task, she tripped over to Augusta's desk, and placing her slate

before her, as she sat surrounded by her admirers, asked :

“ Will you be kind enough to tell me whether I have the forty-second problem placed correctly ? I see you have the same lesson.”

Augusta, who saw that her waiting friends were looking for something from her, reaching out a slender, delicate hand, pushed the slate away.

“ Really, miss,” she said, haughtily, “ I cannot spare time to assist you. Suppose you try one of the under-teachers, if you can find a real solemn, good one like yourself.”

Mollie hesitated a moment, in perfect surprise, with a flush of pride and anger on her face, and then drawing the slate toward her, said, with a smile of great sweetness: “ I am sorry to have troubled you. I will take it

to Professor Adams ;" and with a bow, she took her slate and walked up to the desk of the principal and asked assistance, a thing which not one of the group she had left would have dared to do. The principal, in answer to her question, raised his eyes, and liking her bright face and respectful manner, drew the slate to him and explained the problem at length. She thanked him so heartily when he had finished that he smiled, and catching sight of the watching faces of the group of girls, said, loud enough for them to hear : " You are quite welcome. Come again when you are in difficulty."

Mollie was not triumphant, although she had just cause to be so, but returned to her seat without even a glance toward the group. When they

recovered from their astonishment, they were very angry.

"I wonder if that little thing in the calico dress supposes she can rule us?" said one girl, spitefully.

"She will find herself mistaken," replied Augusta, drawing herself up. And so it grew to be a concerted plan among them, that they could not do too much to trouble and annoy their young schoolmate.

Mollie was not long in finding this out, much to her regret and dismay. And when she knew that it was in part occasioned by her love for her Lord and Master, and her consequent attention to Bible reading and prayer, she was more and more hurt. She had a good cry all to herself at home, but a prayer followed the cry, and after that no one saw or heard any-

thing in her manner or words which led them to suppose that she was hurt. But she was grievously wounded in the days which followed. If her friends at home had known the half, they would have removed her directly, but she had set herself to overcome it and live it down, and in so doing her cheek grew thin and pale and her step slow and trembling.

It is wonderful how much girls can do to harass and torment one another when they really set their minds upon the task. Mollie left her desk in order every night, but the morning often found it in dire confusion, and an extra task appointed her for negligence. The margins of her book would be found by her covered with pencil-marks and scribblings, oftentimes with remarks which she would

never have thought of writing. Her hat would disappear from its nail in the cloak-room, her over-shoes were ever missing on a rainy day, and she would find these articles in the most out-of-the-way places. Apple parings would be slipped into her pocket, and pictures of herself in every position of prayer or reverent attention. Fifty times a day she would hear ill-natured remarks about her as she passed groups of girls, and they, following their leader Augusta, drew away from her until she was left alone.

The teachers could not understand it and held their peace. Mollie was a good scholar, regular, attentive and prompt, but why she had no intercourse with the pupils was what they could not understand. Some girls there were who liked her much, but

for fear of Augusta they could not associate with her, and in the mean time, as I say, she was growing pale and thin. So far will the bad influence of a popular girl lead others in the wrong.

And what did Mollie do? Everything in her power to return acts of goodness and kindness for these acts of cruelty. She would leave an apple or an orange in Augusta's desk at recess, which that young lady was sure to eat—shame to her!—she would explain examples (for they came to her in need), copy exercises—in short, do everything in her power for them.

One morning, after this had been going on for some months, the principal rang the bell and announced that he would call the first class in Latin in half an hour. “I am aware, young

ladies, that the recitation is not due until afternoon," he said, "but of course it will make no difference to you, for I trust it is already prepared."

"Oh," said Augusta in a loud whisper, "what shall I do? My book is at home, and I don't know a word of my lesson!"

Mollie had her own book and was reviewing the already partially prepared lesson, but she closed it and raised her hand for permission to consult the dictionary at the desk. Permission was given, and as she rose she took her Latin Reader with her, and as she passed Augusta she laid it down and stepped forward to the desk. Mollie, Augusta and one or two others were the only ones who recited perfectly, and as Mollie passed them on her way out one of the girls said:

“Gussy, where did you get a Latin book?”

“Oh,” she replied, carelessly, “old Muggins dropped it by accident on my desk, so I kept it.

This was her constant reward, but still, aided by a Power higher than her own, with a heavenly patience she persevered.

The writing of a monthly essay always decided the standing of each girl in her class, and perhaps there was no task upon which the girls expended more diligence than upon this. But work as they would, Augusta always stood at the head, and since her arrival, Mollie ever stood next. Consequently, Augusta had of late tried harder than ever to keep her place, fearful that “Old Muggins,” as she called her, would get it, and per-

haps in no place had Mollie suffered more than in her position next to Augusta in the class.

The exercises were on the afternoon of the first day of the month, which fell on the first of May upon Monday. On the Sunday preceding, Augusta had written hers at the expense of three or four Sunday hours, and it was finished and prepared on Monday morning, leaving her the day for her lessons, which were not learned. Mollie, on the contrary, prepared her lessons and the "rough" of her essay on the evening of Saturday, intending to spend the Monday school-time in copying it.

She was preparing to do this on Monday morning, and had placed the paper before her, when an exclamation of sorrow and consternation, of grief

and dismay, from Augusta, made her look up. She had been giving some last touches to her manuscript, when, moving carelessly, her ink bottle overturned, the contents saturating her precious sheets. The girl was pale with disappointment and grief.

“Write it again,” suggested one of the girls.

“I cannot,” she returned, the tears coming into her eyes—“I cannot, for I do not know a single lesson.” In her anger she rose from her seat and threw her essay into the coal-box.

Mollie saw, heard and decided. Taking occasion to cross the room, she seized the sheets from the box, and concealing them beneath her apron, returned to her seat. Then she commenced to copy upon her own paper the ruined essay, hiding the original

from prying eyes. She had her own still to copy, and she required busy fingers and a steady hand to accomplish it. When at length Augusta's was finished, she had only an hour left to complete her own, and in her hurry and the pain and cramped feeling about her hands, it was very poorly done. She knew that she would lose by it, but she felt as if she cared nothing about it. She was resolved to do good to them that hated her.

The essays were laid upon a certain table when completed, and Mollie placed the two, her own and Augusta's, on a pile with the rest. Augusta's face frowned darkly as she passed without depositing hers.

Late in the afternoon they gathered for the reading, which was done by

Professor Andrews. He always commenced with the poorest and read on to the best. Mollie's turn came before she was ready for it. "I am sorry to say," he remarked as he took up her composition, "that Miss Mount must lose two places in the class for the carelessness with which her composition is prepared." Augusta's eyes brightened. The essay was read and laid aside. The two above her were then read, and finally Professor Andrews took up the nicely-prepared work of Mollie. He read the title, and then said: "Below this is written: 'As Miss Augusta's work was blotted by an accident this morning, her essay was copied by her friend, Mollie Mount.'"

He hesitated a moment, and then read the paper through. There was a

dead silence in the room when he finished and said very gravely :

“ Miss Augusta retains her place at the head through the kindness of her friend, Miss Mount. Miss Mollie,” he continued, “ why is not your own written as well as this ?”

“ I had not time, sir,” she replied, quietly.

She looked toward Augusta as they were dismissed and was startled by the deadly whiteness of her face. In the cloak-room Mollie found her again, standing with her head in her hands, leaning against the mantel. The girls were standing around her, anxiously asking what was the matter. She roused as Mollie came in, and when she saw her she broke away from them, and stepping toward her, threw her arms about her neck, crying :

“Oh, Mollie Mount! Mollie Mount! You have conquered me, you noble child!”

“No, Augusta, give my Master the praise,” replied Mollie.

“Your Master is the Lord, Mollie Mount,” she continued, “and you are his brave, faithful servant. Your religion shall be mine if it will make me as pure and noble as you are. Can you forgive me?”

Mollie looked in her eyes as simply as a little child, and said: “Let us kiss and be friends.” Augusta kissed her, sobbing, and without a word to her favorites, who stood in speechless astonishment, took her hat and departed.

The next morning when the school was called to order, Professor Andrews stepped forward to the edge of

the platform, and said that before the Bible was read Miss Augusta Cleveland had a word to say to the scholars. She rose at this summons, and hesitating not an instant, made a complete confession of all the wrong she had been guilty of toward Mollie from the first day until now. "I confess it all and claim all the blame," she said, "because it is all my fault. I am counted as a leader here, and I have used my influence steadily toward the evil. This little Christian in the service of her Master has conquered me by kindness. I am henceforth not only her friend, but the servant of her Lord, and I will use whatever power remains with me for his service."

Then, for the first time in all the months of torment that had passed, and all the evils and trials she had

borne, Mollie leaned her head upon her desk and cried before her school-mates.

Augusta did try. It was hard work for her to undo the wrong she had done. It took months and months to retrieve past error, but finally she succeeded, and Mollie was a favorite, reigning side by side with Augusta. They were both subjects of the same King—the Lord Jesus Christ.



VII.

To Him who Wills, Ways are seldom
Wanting.

VII.

*TO HIM WHO WILLS, WAYS ARE SELDOM
WANTING.*

I WANT to tell you the story of my little maid. Not that she was anything wonderful, but her noble conduct has had such an effect upon me.

I am not yet grown up—that is, not altogether, for I am only fifteen; but I never knew my mother, as she died when I was a little baby, and papa said I must have a maid to help me take care of myself. I thought when he first suggested the idea to me that he would find a person much older and

wiser than I to see that I did all that was right. You may imagine how much surprised I was, when the maid was announced, to see walking in at the door some one not much older or larger than myself. She looked so pleasant and companionable that I came very near jumping up and kissing her, but I remembered that it would not be at all proper, so I pressed my two hands very tightly together to keep myself still, and said very slowly, that I might appear dignified:

“Is this my maid?”

“Yes, Miss Ida,” she answered.

“Have you come to stay?” I asked again.

“Yes, Miss Ida,” she returned.

I was afraid of her and wanted to get up and run away, but I knew that would never do, so I said:

“You may go with Mrs. James, the housekeeper. When I want you I will ring.”

I thought that was a wonderful speech after I had made it. I felt as if I were mistress of the whole house instead of one little maid.

I found something for her to do after a while, and when I had set her to mending my gloves and brushing my cloak, the strangeness commenced to wear off. I grew to like her very much and to feel it a pleasure whenever she was working around me. I gave her a good deal of time to herself, too. I used to think that if she knew how much I wished her near me, and how loth I was to spare her when I gave her leave to go, that she would not have gone so often. I found afterward how very much mistaken I

had been, and it is about this I want to tell you.

I rang the bell for her one morning while I was finishing a letter, and when I had sealed and directed it, I found her standing by my side awaiting my order. As I glanced up, after giving the letter into her hand, I noticed she looked pale and worn, and I asked her if she felt well.

"Quite well," she replied, and turned away as soon as she could.

I was a careless girl and never had any one but myself to think about, so I forgot her and her looks until she came to me later in the day and stood timidly behind my chair. I was working roses on a square of worsted, and being busy counting stitches, I did not lift my head, but asked, "What is it?" as she waited.

“If you please, Miss Ida, I thought I might ask you to help me.” She held out an algebra as she spoke, and asked in a few words the solution of a problem. “I thought as you were always studying you would be willing to show me,” she said.

I had it on my lips to ask her why she was studying a branch of which, literally, I did not suppose she knew the A B C, but something in her manner checked me, and feeling rather proud that I could explain the example, I took a pencil and paper, ciphered and explained. She listened intently, and when I finished thanked me earnestly. I do not know what good feeling prompted me, but I said:

“Any time you want help do not hesitate to come to me. I shall always

be glad to help you, and any of the books in the right-hand case of the library are at your service. Those belong to me; the rest are father's." She seemed very much pleased, and thanked me again.

I noticed after this that my library shelves were constantly visited, sometimes for one book, sometimes for another, all of them branches of study, for although I had a good collection of tales and poems, I never missed one of them. However she used these books—and from the number she took there must have been a quantity of studying—I never missed her from her duties. She came whenever my bell rang, but, as I say, I was not exacting, so she had many hours of leisure. I never inquired into her history in any way. I think if I had

been older and more observing, I should have known from her face that she had care upon her, and should have tried to cheer her. I always had her with me in the evening, because my father was so often away then and I was lonely. She sat on one side of an open fire and I on the other. She kept a book or some fine work near, and I almost always read.

One night I dropped my book, tired of the long silence, and leaning back, looked across the fire at my young companion, who, strange to say, was doing nothing but sitting with her hands folded, gazing into the fire. She did not perceive that I had ceased reading, and so did not look up until I spoke.

“Maggie,” I said, “I have found a very beautiful story in this book which

I have been reading. Would you like to hear it?"

"Thank you, Miss Ida! I would like it very much," she said, turning her face toward me, but I noticed by the fire-light that she looked pale and worn. I took up the book and read:

"Once there was a king who had a very large vineyard. The vines were so plentiful and the fruit so rich and rare that it required many men to take care of it. The king loved his laborers very much, and was accustomed to walk about among them, talking to them and watching them. Most of the men loved the king in return, but some were fearful that when he promised them wages he did not mean what he said. Sometimes he would find a laborer who had trained the tender vines until the long stoop-

ing to bring the tender branches into place had made him weak and very tired. "My dear servant," the king would say, "I see that your work is almost finished, and you have done it well. Such sweet rest shall be yours as you never dreamed of, and it will be my pleasure to have you near me and my name shall be in your forehead." Another he would find whose vines hung drooping, and who lay upon the ground in the shade eating the fresh grapes, which he might reach by stretching out his hand. "Do you know how to do your work?" asked the king. "Yes," said the servant. "I will give you great treasure if you will do my work," urged the king. "The grapes are good enough for me," said the man. "To him who knoweth to do good, and doeth it not,

to him it is sin," replied the king, passing on his way very sorrowfully. Next to this man toiled another, and, although he worked earnestly and long, yet the idle servant was ever teasing him to lay aside his work. "Thou bearest with all gentleness and meekness, with long-suffering," said the king to him; "do not forget that there remaineth a rest for thee." "Shall I be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height of thy love?" he asked, looking with great joy on the king. "He has never proved that he loved us," said the idle one, sneeringly. "Thou knowest, my servant beloved," said the king with a gentle smile toward his patient worker, "that greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay

down his life for his friends." Finally the king came to a man who was not only doing his own work, but continually stepping aside to help others not so strong as himself. His work did not suffer meanwhile, for as he came back to it the drooping vines revived beneath his first touch, and so skilled had he become that he had plenty of time for others. The king looked very kindly on him and said: "Well done, good and faithful servant! Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Near him was a man striving to lift into its place a heavy branch, almost heavier than he could bear. After repeated trials it finally was fastened securely in its place, and the worker glanced triumphantly at his king. "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with

me on my throne," said the king. By and by all the work was done, and then those who had been faithful were received into the king's house, but the idle were left outside of the gates. There was rest and joy and pleasure within, more than can be told in words. Each one had his dearest desire fulfilled; but the greatest joy of all was to be constantly near the king, whose name was called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." ""

It did me good to see Maggie's face, it was so lifted and sunny when I finished.

"Was not the king kind?" I asked.

"Oh yes," she replied, gently, "the love of our Lord Jesus is wonderful."

I saw she had appreciated it, so I

read on, well satisfied with my listener, and when I finished she thanked me so sweetly and looked so much happier that I was repaid for any little effort I had made.

If I had been older and wiser, I should have noticed after this that something was going wrong with the busy girl, but I was so fond of myself and my own pleasure that for two weeks afterward I never thought of her except to call her when I wanted her. She was always ready, and very gentle and loving. One evening, after she had arranged my room for the night, she came and stood by my chair as she had done on the afternoon of the algebra question. She had often been to me since, so I said :

“ Well, Maggie, what puzzles you to-night ? ”

“Miss Ida,” she replied, “I have a great favor to ask of you.” It was so strange for her to ask a favor that I turned round and looked at her. “I wanted to know,” she said, not without some effort, “if you could excuse me for a week or two from remaining in the house at night. I have a sick brother at home who needs my care.”

It was the first time she had spoken of her home, and now it was evident she did not wish to do so.

“I will gladly excuse you,” I replied, “but you know I must see papa about it first. Would you like to go to-night?”

“If you please, Miss Ida.”

So I rose and went to papa, who consented, and as I gave her permission, I said :

“Do not sit up at night. It is very wearying.”

She smiled very queerly, and said she would not any more than she could help.

She changed very much after that. Her cheeks grew white and thin and her eyes were heavy. Once I caught her wiping away tears, and I bethought myself to ask her how her brother was.

“Better,” she said, but her eyes filled again. I gave her some fruit for him, and it cheered her instantly, so little did it take to please her. It was the same day at dinner that papa said :

“Ida, is Maggie to be in the house this afternoon?”

“No, papa,” I replied ; “I gave her the afternoon, but she can be here if you wish.”

"I do not wish," he said; "but I hear very curious stories about your little maid, and, if you please, we will ride over to her home this afternoon and see her."

"But, papa, I do not know where she lives."

"I do," he returned, shortly.

"What have you heard, papa?" I asked.

"Wait and see if it be true," he answered.

I was all impatience, for I feared there was something wrong. I think I should have asked Maggie, but I found that she had gone when I went up stairs. Papa's face was very grave when he put me into the carriage. He talked to me about my studies all the way, and it was a long way. We wound through a part of

the town in which I had never been before, and when at last we did stop, it was in front of a forlorn wooden house, in the lower story of which was a miserable cake shop, and the second floor of which had a sloping roof.

“I want to see and hear your little maid without her seeing us,” said papa.

He helped me down and I followed him, very much amazed, up a rickety flight of stairs into an entry above, or rather a room, for the stairs opened into a room, bare and chill, from the farther side of which opened a door into another room. This stood open, and we could hear voices within. Motioning to me to be very quiet, papa passed across on tip-toe and stood near the door, where he could see inside the

room without being seen. I followed and stood beside him.

I think I never shall recall the few moments I stood there without being overcome anew with the sense of utter astonishment I had then. The room was plainly furnished, and evidently was the living room of the family, for there were both a bed and a cooking-stove in it. Near this last stood—could it be?—Maggie in an old faded calico dress, her hair pushed aside, bending over a great tub, from which the steam rose, and scrubbing away on the wash-board with all her might. On a tiny shelf above the tub was a book, fastened open and protected from straying drops. As she raised her head from time to time to wring some article, her eye would fall upon the page and she seemed to study a

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MAGGIE AT THE WASH-TUB.

few minutes. A little distance from her, in a low chair by the window, sat a sick boy, wan and pale, bundled about with pillows, and at his feet a little girl about six years old, putting quick stitches into a pair of worn stockings.

“Where are their parents?” I whispered in amazement.

“That brave girl at the tub is all they have,” returned my father in a choked voice.

“Is this what you heard?” I asked.

“Yes,” he replied. “Hush!”

I quitted immediately, for they were talking.

“Sister Maggie,” said a wee voice coming from the easy-chair, “tell me about Miss Ida. Stop studying a little while and talk to me.”

Maggie reluctantly took her eyes

away from her book and turned toward the little brother.

“What shall I tell you?” she asked with a smile such as I never had seen on her face and which seemed worth as much as anything she might tell.

“Oh, about the pretty things she has and how she goes riding!”

So I listened, with a heart that bled, to a description of things which made up my daily life and seemed to me common comforts. All my little belongings, from my Geneva watch to slippers lined with down, the little ones listened to, with once and a while an exclamation of delight and longing. The carriage from which I had just alighted seemed expressly a wonder.

“She rides in a satin-lined carriage with two black horses to draw it,” said Maggie, “and the movement is so easy

that you seem to be sailing on a quiet river."

"Sister Maggie, were you ever in it?" asked the little boy.

"Yes, Harry, I took a ride with her one day when she was going out to tea and needed me. I wish you could have been in my place." A sigh came with the last sentence.

"Why, sister Maggie, didn't you like it?"

"Yes, only I could not help thinking all the time how it would bring the roses into your cheeks."

"Miss Ida must be very, very happy," said the little girl, musingly.

"Yes, I think she is," said Maggie.

"And she is not proud, I think you told us," said the little boy.

"No, not proud in the least. You know it was she who sent you those

nice oranges, and who helps me with my lessons."

My father turned toward me very much pleased, but I was overcome. It seemed to me as if I had never been anything but selfish and cruel to keep all my luxuries away from these children.

"Some day you are going to ask her to lend me that beautiful story of the Lord Jesus and his vineyard, are you not, Maggie?"

"I think so," replied Maggie. And then continued more sorrowfully, "Miss Ida has no mother, but she has a dear father."

"Has she a dear, good sister Maggie?" asked the little girl.

"No," laughed Maggie, "but she has plenty of good aunts and cousins."

"I'd rather have sister Maggie than

all of them, wouldn't you, Kit?" said the sick boy. "Aunts and cousins wouldn't watch with us as Maggie did when I was so sick."

"Maggie's everything," said Kitty, energetically.

"Papa," I said—"papa, let us go in, and may I not take Harry riding, bring Kitty a new dress and let Maggie study all day long?"

"My daughter may do all she likes toward helping this noble girl, and I will aid her in it," said my father, taking my hand.

It needed only two or three decided steps on the boards to turn their attention toward us, and Maggie's hands came very quickly out of the tub, and she came to us flushed and smiling.

I thought I was going to be very

brave, but when I opened my mouth to speak I only said :

“ Oh, Maggie, why didn't you tell me ?” and then broke down and cried. Maggie looked puzzled and asked hurriedly :

“ What is the matter ?”

“ Ida is sorrowing to find you without the many comforts she enjoys,” said papa ; “ and I am sorry too, for if you had only told us we would have given you a better home than this. But tell me, why are you studying ?”

“ I thought, sir,” said Maggie, flushing, “ that with a little more study I might fit myself for a teacher, and so make my brother and sister more comfortable. I fill the place of father and mother both, you know.”

I had checked my tears by this

time. Somehow I could not cry here where this girl, who was my own age, had been so brave and true. I went across the little room and knelt down by the sick boy's chair, who, with his sister, had never taken his eyes from us.

"Are you well enough to walk, Harry?" I asked.

"Yes, miss," he said, timidly, and in exactly his sister's manner—the sister who had been my maid. To think of little insignificant me having such a maid!

"Because," I said, "if you could walk down stairs I would like to take you and your sister"—here I caught the other pair of wondering eyes—"out for a ride. My carriage is just here."

"Ah!" said they both together, and

a flush came into the pale cheek before me.

"Papa," I said, "I want to take this little boy and his sister to ride this beautiful afternoon."

"You had better ask Maggie," he said.

Maggie was very happy. She feared it was too much trouble. "Dear Harry did not look as well as he might," she said, for she "had not been able to do as she wished for him, and she was afraid I would find them troublesome."

There was no danger of this. I think I was never more happy in my life than in the next two hours. It seemed as if I had taken them into paradise, and as I bade the coachman drive into the park, and we wound round the walks, I think I never knew

three children more wondrously happy than we. "To think of you and me being in the satin-lined carriage!" I heard one say to the other, while I was giving directions to the coachman. How the blood came rushing into the boy's pale cheeks, and how his sister laughed and cried over him when we came back!

A week after and I had lost my little maid, for she was installed over a school of sixty bright-faced boys and girls. "Very thoroughly prepared," the committee said she was. The little sick boy was in my old nursery under the care of the housekeeper, and papa said his sister must come and keep him company, so Kitty came too.

At night the young school-mistress comes in, and loves to stand and

watch the happy couple, who, sitting upon the soft chairs they had loved to hear about, feeling comfortable and happy, talk together with low laughs of pleasure and content. She turns to us then with her face full of gratitude, and tries to thank us, but I always say :

“Stop, Maggie, it is your own faithfulness and God’s goodness that have given you these blessings.”

I have never had a maid since then, and I never want one more. It seems as if the three could never do enough for me; and if I desired any recompense for what I have done for them, I have it in seeing them happy and well, and in knowing, as I do, that Maggie is loved and respected by all her scholars. They read over together the allegory of the king and the vineyard, and, in

their gratitude and love, they call the person who lifted up the tender vines by my name. There is a great comfort in seeing others happy through your influence, but there is a greater happiness in scattering the gifts God has given you in gratitude for his mercies.

This is the story of my little maid.



VIII.

No Leaf Moves but God Wills it.

VIII.

NO LEAF MOVES BUT GOD WILLS IT.

FRANK did not want to leave his book and his sunny corner by the window to traverse the busy, crowded streets of New York and cross the ferry to Jersey City. Nothing but duty would have induced him to do so, but knowing how much his father's comfort and pleasure depended upon the prompt arrangement of the business matter he had on hand, he closed his book, took up his hat and left the house.

When he arrived at the crowded ferry he found that a boat had just

come in, and choosing rather to spend the few minutes before it started on the boat than in the not over-clean waiting-room, he stepped on board and took his seat in the saloon at the farther end. He had neglected to buy a newspaper, and so with nothing to do but wait—and that is very hard work sometimes—he sat watching the people come in. What a number there were of all classes and ages and sizes! First he noticed two little musicians with their harps, going probably to spend the day in Jersey City, or in the little villages about there, playing and singing. They stood listlessly at one end of the saloon with their harps leaned up against the wood-work. Then a party of travelers going southward, who seemed very much elated with the prospect of their journey.

Then three or four young clerks like himself, with their pockets full of letters, and, unlike himself, with their heads too full of business to notice any one. Then a mother with her baby, two or three market-women and some laborers, three or four little girls with their nurses, some fashionably-dressed ladies, and then a very grave-faced working-girl, two commercial travelers with their little bags, and a busy merchant who made notes on the edge of his newspaper. Finally they crowded one upon another so fast that Frank ceased to count them, and they placed themselves, some inside, some outside, all about the boat, waiting until they could be carried across the division between the two States impassable for their feet.

Suddenly, as Frank looked about

upon all these faces, he wondered how many of them had a thought of God's love toward them, or whether the most of them loved the Saviour who had died for them. He thought of the "sweet story of old," and wished very strongly that an angel's voice could tell it here and to all these.

Suddenly, as he dwelt on this thought, the voice within his heart whispered: "When will you have a better chance to witness for Jesus?" "But I cannot speak here," he replied to it. "But you can sing a hymn," it pleaded; "people always listen to music." "But I am so young," urged he with the Spirit. "So was the Lord when he talked with the doctors in the temple." "My voice may falter and lose its power." "It will reach a dozen or twenty at least, and that may do in-

calculable good. Go, and my grace is sufficient for thee."

All this was within, and few, if any, noticed that a young man left his seat and with a white face stepped across the saloon to a station near the door. Once there he turned half round to be partly inside and partly on the deck, and in a moment every eye was upon him, for in a clear, full, steady, and very feeling voice, he sang:

"One there is above all others
Well deserves the name of Friend;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end.

"Which of all our friends to save us
Could or would have shed his blood?
But this Saviour died to have us
Reconciled in him to God.

"When he lived on earth abasèd,
'Friend of sinners' was his name,
Now, above all glory raisèd,
He rejoices in the same.

“Oh for grace our hearts to soften !
Teach us, Lord, at length to love ;
We, alas ! forget too often
What a Friend we have above !”

He sung amid a silence that could be felt. The jar of the machinery as they started, the working of the boat upon the waves, and the stamp of horses' feet between decks, were the only sounds. Every tongue was hushed ; gentlemen dropped their papers and listened ; the two little harpers hearkened with straining ears, and as the sweet words dropped into the hearts of that boat-load of people, in the clear distinctness with which they were uttered, they could not help seeing and knowing the love which had been poured out for them.

It was done. God's gift to men was made known to them. They

might forget it, but they knew it now and felt it. The boat neared the opposite shore. There were talkers here and there, but solemn stillness for the most part reigned. It broke gradually, and as the boat touched the opposite pier the influence seemed over and gone. Frank would scarcely have realized that he had sung if it had not been for a strained feeling in his throat, but as he was stepping off a hand came through the crowd grasping his, and an old silver-haired gentleman said :

“Young man, you could not have done a better thing. We thank you very much.”

If he had needed recompense, he was paid now. He went his way, finished his business and returned to his sunny corner and his book, almost

forgetful of the lesson of the morning.

Who can calculate the influence of that one hymn! I can tell you only a little. I can tell you of three out of that whole multitude, where the influence of the hymn remained.

The two little harpers spent the day going from place to place with their music and begging pennies. They met with a few kind words, but many coarse and cruel ones. Nevertheless they made enough to give them a dinner and supper, and when the summer night drew down over the earth, they were in an open field among the hay-stacks. They spread the soft, sweet hay upon the ground and made themselves a bed and lay down upon it.

“Will,” said one to the other, look-

ing up to the bright stars as he spoke, "do you remember the gentleman who sang on board the boat this morning?"

"Yes," replied the other; "wasn't it pretty?"

"You know," continued the first, "he said we had a Friend above the stars up there who loved us more than we loved each other."

"I wonder if he sees us now, Dick?"

"I somehow think he does, Will, and we can go to sleep without being in the least afraid when we know he is watching us."

So the two went to sleep, trusting their new-found Friend, while the eyes of Him who "sticketh closer than a brother" were over them in love and protecting care.

A market-man heard the hymn as

he went to secure his produce for the New York market, and during his day's work the words were constantly recurring to his mind. It was not a very successful day. His produce sold for a lower price than he had hoped it would, and he was disappointed at the delay of a sum of money which he had been expecting; so as toward the close of the day he drove his heavy farm wagon again across the ferry, his heart was sore and heavy. The faithful horses trudged, with the empty wagon behind them, through the villages, out into the open country, and on toward his home. The miles lessened, and he heeded them not among his despondent thoughts. By and by upon these came the hymn again. It seemed as if the words echoed themselves back in his memory until he

was a child again and listening to his mother's voice. With the remembrance of her voice came the recollection of her teachings and example, her life of patience, trust and long suffering—how she had lived with these in her heart, how she had died with these for her crown. The thought softened him and gave him hope. He commenced to sing gently the words of the morning, until, his voice rising in power with the wondrous sweetness of the words, the melody floated through woods and fields, echoed and re-echoed everywhere.

It was late, and his wife, having waited long and anxiously for his coming, finally put a light in the window and stood in the doorway watching and hearkening. Finally the tramp of horses' feet reached her ear, and after

it, a full voice singing through the night:

“ Oh for grace our hearts to soften !
Teach us, Lord, at length to love ;
We, alas ! forget too often
What a Friend we have above !”

A poor, sad-faced working girl heard the hymn. She had left a dying sister at home, and would not see her until night again. All day long as she set stitches one after another, she worked her pain into the cloth, but she worked the hymn in too, and the comfort of the Friend she had not known stilled and cheered her. Finally she had leave to go home, and there she bent over the couch of the little sister, who had failed very much since the morning.

“ Tell me something pretty,” said the little one, faintly.

"I will tell you," said her sister, holding the hot hand in her own cool one, "of some words I heard from a gentleman on the ferry-boat this morning. He sang them, and I have remembered them all day. I sang them when I was a little girl:

'One there is above all others
Well deserves the name of Friend,"

and so on to the end, softly singing. As drops of dew fall on the sun-heated flowers, so fell these words upon the little blossom so near the close of life. She shut her eyes and listened, smiling gently, and after it was through fell into a quiet slumber. It was midnight when she awoke again, and her sister, who was watching beside her, saw that the last change was coming, and calling her mother, lifted the slight

form so that her head rested upon her sister's shoulder. She breathed two or three times and then looked up.

"What is it, Nellie darling?" said the sister, and she stooped to catch the words.

"One there is—above—all others—What—a Friend—we—have—above." And so saying she fell asleep and awoke with her Friend.

"Oh," you say, "if only Frank had known!" No, dear reader, it is better as it was. Think what a crowd of witnesses it would have brought around his pillow! Frank sowed the seeds, the gentle leading of circumstances, which is the Spirit's guidance, watered it, and God increased and multiplied it exceedingly. Nevertheless, the sweet peace that visited Frank that night was a gentle wafting from

the deed of the morning, and was the Saviour's peace, which "passeth understanding."

NOTE.—There was a hymn thus sung on a New York ferry-boat in the summer of 1869, and the account of it reached the writer through two or three narrators, each having been impressed because "the stillness during the singing of the hymn was so solemn."



IX.

Cheer up; God is where He was.

IX.

CHEER UP; GOD IS WHERE HE WAS.

IF you should try to think of all the lives you know, of all the people with whom you have been acquainted, and of the daily life of each one, you would not be able to find a narrower or lonelier life than that of little Nellie Burges.

Her father was the keeper of a lightship; that is, he had charge of a vessel which was anchored some miles away from land, and which was used as a sort of floating lighthouse, with lanterns fastened high up upon the masts at night, to warn sailors away from some shoal or rocky place. The

vessel lay tossing to and fro for months, and the lightkeeper and his family, with a few sailors, made their home there, sometimes without speaking to a stranger for weeks, and without going on shore for months.

Occasionally, a passing vessel would draw near enough for them to hear the men shouting on her decks and to see them moving about. Sometimes a little sailboat came pitching out to them with fresh provisions, or perhaps a government steamer brought oil for the lamps. But these were the great days, when they forgot to be lonely; the rest of the time would be days and nights of tossing and rocking, with very little to do.

Nellie was twelve years old at the time of which I am writing, and she had lived in the lightship seven win-

ters. She had grown used to the vessel and the men, her father at his work and her mother in the cabin. At first, for a few days, she loved the ship and the fast-rolling sea; but that was all over long ago, and now she longed for the life which she knew others had—of industry, study and pleasure, and of intercourse with those of her own age. Her father made baskets in the long days when there was nothing to do for his lightship. She tried to learn the art, but the stiff, twisting withes made her hands ache, so she gave it up.

Her mother taught her to read, but she soon knew all that the yellow-covered spelling-book could teach, and repeated almost the whole of its contents from memory. There were no other books to read, so her educa-

tion stopped there. She asked questions about the sea and the fish, until she knew all that the sailors could tell her, and they were forced to say, "I do not know," and send her away disappointed. She learned much in her lonely life which older heads would have given a great deal to have known—the changes of the sky, the approach of wind or rain, the varying colors of the sea and its wonderful inhabitants.

Yet Nellie Burges was not a happy little girl. She was just old enough to wish for a great many things which she had not, and she sat swinging to and fro in the rigging hour after hour, longing for the time to come when she could live on the land and go to school and study, when she could know other children and join their

games, or go into the woods and pick flowers all day long. She sometimes imagined that she had a playmate on board the vessel who shared all her duties and pleasures; but this was so little like reality to her that she soon gave it up. Her father and mother had become accustomed to hearing her express her wish for a different life, but they had no means of changing their lot; so they lived on and tried to cheer her.

It was of no use; she would not be contented. She felt even more keenly than girls are apt to feel that her life was slipping away from her, and she knew and saw nothing but the sea, the rocking vessel and the gleaming lights at mast-head which were reflected twinkling in the water. She would never stay in the cabin any

longer than she could help—it seemed to stifle her; and as soon as the sailors' steps were heard above in the early morning, she sprang up and went upon the deck. There she stayed all day, either lying in the rigging or coiled up among the ropes and sails, playing with her little dog and talking or singing to herself. Sometimes she would lie so still for hours together that the sailors would pass by softly, thinking her asleep and fearing to wake her; but when any one of them came nearer, where he could see her face, he would find the large, mournful eyes wide open and the sad, wistful mouth fixed and still.

One day, when she had lain a long time in one of these thoughtful moods, she was roused by the sound of hur-

ried feet, and rising, she walked across the deck, and found her father with several of the men watching the approach of the government steamer which carried oil for the lamps, and, what was more important to Nellie, sometimes brought newspapers. She went to the side of the vessel eagerly, and stood watching the little steamboat as she came rolling along over the high waves. It had been rough during the night, and the approach was difficult, so that it was some time before she was safely secured. When, however, it was successfully accomplished, the officer sprang on board the lightship, and was followed almost immediately by a gentleman at whom Nellie gazed in the most unfeigned astonishment. Not that he was in any way peculiar, but his dress was

the garb of a gentleman, and therefore strange to Nellie. His neat gray suit was relieved by spotless linen, and the hands and face were delicate, showing him to be accustomed only to indoor life. He was a man of middle age, with an open, genial countenance, and as Nellie observed him, was looking about the lightship with evident pleasure.

Nellie's astonishment was set at rest in a moment, when the officer introduced her father. "Captain," he said, "this is Mr. Drummond, a friend of mine, traveling the rounds with me for his health. He has taken a wonderful fancy to this trim vessel of yours."

Captain Burges, pleased with the praise of his vessel, which he loved almost as much as his daughter, led

the stranger about, explaining its parts and pointing out its beauties. Nellie stood impatiently swinging to and fro by one of the ropes, waiting for them to finish their conversation and receive the oil, so that she might ask the officer for the batch of papers. By and by she found a chance just before they left, and stepping up to the officer, with her eager eyes lifted to his face, she made her request.

“Captain Reynolds, you have brought some papers, haven’t you?”

They all turned to her as the timid voice made the request, and the officer replied, regretfully,

“I am very sorry, Nellie, but I came away without them this time. I was in such a hurry, you see. It is too bad to disappoint you, but I won’t forget next time.”

"Next time will be three months from now," returned the disappointed little girl, turning away and scarcely able to keep her lips from quivering.

She went and sat down mournfully on a hammock which had been hung for her at one side, and looked very hopeless. The stranger's eyes followed her, and after a few minutes he left the other gentlemen and walked over to where she sat.

"What do you have to read, little girl?" he asked, stopping beside the hammock.

"Nothing but the little yellow spelling-book, and I know all that."

"You have a Bible, of course?" he asked rather than said.

"A Bible? No, sir, I think not."

"You know what I mean, do you

not?" he asked in astonishment at her hesitation.

"I've heard the name, I believe, but I've never seen one," replied Nellie.

Mr. Drummond exclaimed in surprise and dismay.

"You know who God is, do you not?" he asked.

"Yes, mother says God keeps the winds from swallowing the ship, and that he lives in heaven."

"That is true," replied the gentleman with a quick smile and in a low, earnest voice; "but there is more. God in heaven loves Nellie Burges very much, and he has given her this wonderful Bible, which tells about himself and his holy people."

Just then the officer called out to Mr. Drummond that it was time to

go ; so hastily drawing a volume out of his pocket, he laid it on the lap of the little girl, saying,

“There ! you may have that ; and remember when you read it that it was written by the great God, and every word is true.”

He was gone before Nellie had time to say a word, and springing down upon the deck of the steamer, joined his friend. Nellie jumped from the hammock, and holding her book tightly in her hands, ran to the vessel's side to call down to him and thank him. He looked up and answered just as the steamer pushed off, and the sight of the radiant little face which looked down at him, and the hands which clasped the Bible so closely, more than repaid him for his gift. The remembrance of the glad

eyes followed him all that day, as the little steamer ploughed her way back to land, and when his wife asked him that night where he had been, he told her he believed he had been upon a missionary trip.

As for Nellie, as soon as the boat was out of sight she ran back to her hammock, and curling herself up within it, opened her precious book. It had been used before, and opened at beautiful stories of God's people, or the marvelous miracles of the Lord Jesus. Nellie read, almost with suspended breath, the story of Noah and Joseph and Samuel and Daniel and Ruth, the gentle, divine sweetness of the Saviour's life, and finally the fearful death endured for us, and the glorious resurrection. Finally, I say; for she stopped there, to lean her head

against the hammock, to cry and sob in pity and wonder at the love where-with he loved us, "in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." If you who have loved the Bible always and treasured many of its blessed words can imagine what it would be to read that sublime history for the first time, you can know how Nellie felt.

The whole world seemed changed when she left her seat and descended into the cabin for her supper. An atmosphere of joy and peace was all about her, and she held her little book close. I cannot tell you what it was to her. I need not tell, to you who know it well, how new beauties opened to her day after day as she read on and on. There was nothing in all her life now where her precious Bible did

not seem to help her. She was never lonely. The wondrous book told her that the narrow life on board the lightship was God's plan for her, and that by and by he would bring her into something happier and better; that he was watching over her, and none of these things should harm her. If she lay watching the waves, the dear book told her many beautiful things. In the windy weather, when the white caps were curling all around the ship, she remembered "the Lord is mightier than the mighty wave;" that he "has placed the sand for the bound of the sea, that it cannot pass it, and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it."

On the calm, sunny days, when the

water lay tranquil and smooth, lapping itself in little waves against the vessel's side, she thought of those beautiful words, "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," and she felt, "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

If cabin duties called little Nellie, and her mother asked her assistance, she gave it cheerfully, knowing that the Lord had commanded it, and it was a joy to obey his command. If the sailors teased her, she bore it without anger or cross words, remembering the blessed words, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."

If, when she was comfortably seated, she saw a group of the sailors doing

nothing, she roused herself and went among them, to read and talk from her marvelous book, knowing who said, "Let him that heareth say, Come!"

Every one said, "Nellie is changed." Her mother loved her help now, it was given so cheerfully; her father ceased to sigh that he could give her nothing better, since she seemed so contented; and the sailors made room for her, welcoming her and the book she loved so well.

She wondered if it were the same world in which she had always lived, and if God was the same before she knew him.

Yes, it was the same world and the same Father above, only Nellie had found what myriads of people had discovered before her, and as many

more will after her—that life is never complete, never utterly settled, until that wondrous love which was poured out for us has been felt in our hearts in all its fullness and comfort. No life was ever so blessed and happy that it did not need it; and none so lonely and solitary but that the love of Christ could shelter and support and beautify it into such marvelous richness that the lowest, smallest life will seem grand and broad if lived for him.

X.

A GOOD ACTION IS NEVER LOST.

A VERY busy, wearisome life it was that Bob Turner lived. It made the little hands grow long and bony and the quiet face weak and pale to sit hour after hour until he had counted ten of them, at the great machine where the white sheets were being ruled for copy-books, and slide them under, one after another, until they were caught and ruled by the delicate pens which glided over the paper. Other little hands, white and plump, would take the copy-books by and by when they were finished, and

on the same sheets which he slid one by one away would trace the fairy lines which form words and sentences. But Bob never thought of this. He only knew how tiresome it was hour after hour, and that the pain never ceased, first in his shoulder and then in his head, often in both, until the noisy hum seemed drowning all his thoughts and senses.

Sometimes, overcome by fatigue, he would nod over the flying sheets, and the jar and turmoil, the pain and weariness, would seem far away; but the moment his hand stayed its work a tap by no means gentle would rouse him to duty and to pain, and the steady din of the machinery would go on, on, as though it would never stop. It was not much better when it did cease at length and he went home;

since his mother's face was sad and anxious, for the father was away in a coasting vessel which had been given up for lost, and they were trying to struggle on without him who had been so kind and worked so hard for them.

Bob was thinking of all this one warm July day as he sat on the tall stool close to the buzzing machine. The beads of perspiration were standing on his forehead, and he was wishing it was twelve o'clock. He was watching, first his sheets, and then some ladies who had entered the room from the farther end and were examining the machinery, walking toward his corner all the while. Just then the machine stopped a moment for the adjustment of a band, and his attention was called back to his work,

which needed care as it started again. He did not perceive, therefore, that one of the ladies stood at his elbow, until a gentle voice said,

“Little boy, you look warm and tired.”

He glanced up quickly into the face above him, and fastened his dark, wistful eyes upon the young lady.

“Yes, ma’am,” he replied, hopelessly, “I’m very tired.”

“How many hours do you work?” she asked, pityingly.

“From seven till six, with an hour at noon.”

She caught her breath and whispered to herself, “Ten hours, and so frail!” but she said to him:

“You need something pleasant to think about during all these hours, don’t you?”

He looked up, a little surprised, and replied,

“I haven’t anything pleasant to think about.”

“Did you ever hear of the Lord Jesus Christ?” she asked in a lower tone.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Then you know that he was once a little boy as small as you are, but now on his throne in heaven he takes care of you and remembers how little boys feel. He is just like a shepherd, and his lambs are all the children who love him, and these he takes care of so that nothing can hurt them. So you can say,

‘The Lord is my shepherd, and I am his lamb ;
One of the smallest and feeblest I am ;’

and it is the little feeble lambs the Good Shepherd cares for most.”

The young lady took from her satchel a picture and fastened it to the frame just in front of Bob.

“There is a picture representing the Good Shepherd,” she said ; “Jesus is the Good Shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep ;” and then she walked away.

Just then the noon-bell sounded, and Bob dropped his hands, and looked at the picture with a face so full of feeling that the young lady should have been there to have seen it. When he could look away from it he went to get his dinner-basket, and on the top of it he found two ripe, juicy peaches. The smile with which they were received would have been thanks enough for the giver, and he sat down to his dinner with her words in his mind :

"The Lord is my shepherd, and I am his lamb;
One of the smallest and feeblest I am."

Somehow the words seemed to help his dinner along even more than the peaches, although nothing could be riper and sweeter than they. By and by the meal was over and the basket put in its place, and Bob went and leaned out of the window, to get a breath of fresh air. He sat there for some time, watching the wagons and carriages rolling along, heard the men shouting and all the confused noises of a great city. He was interested to watch and listen, but once in a while above the noise and tumult he could hear a gentle voice say, "He is just like a shepherd, and his lambs are the children who love him." And then all the rattling of carts, the pawing of horses and the screaming of

men seemed to unite together and say,

“The Lord is my shepherd, and I am his lamb;
One of the smallest and feeblest I am.”

By and by he went back to his seat and his picture. The noon-bell struck, and with the pile of sheets before him he was ready for work. There was a little weary sigh as he placed his hand upon the top one, as if his shoulders ached, and he dreaded handling every one of that great number; but just then the director came along and started the machine. The paper was slipped into place, and the pens commenced their rapid tracing of the blue lines across the white surface. But oh, blessed comfort! the machine began to sing to Bob. He had never heard it sing before; the rush and

rumble seemed all to sink into one sweet tune:

“The Lord is—my shepherd—and I am—his lamb;
One of the—smallest—and feeblest—I am.”

It seemed to Bob if the pile were twice as high he could slide every sheet through to those words, for he knew they were so sweetly true.

“‘It is the little feeble lambs the Good Shepherd cares for most,’ she said,” he repeated, with his eyes on the picture.

“What are you smiling about?” asked the director, coming round by his side to oil the machinery.

“I am listening to the music of the machine,” he replied, as it stopped, and he rested his arm a moment upon the pile of sheets.

“It’s not very smiling kind of music that it makes for me,” said the director,

starting it again ; but Bob didn't hear him say this, for the music had commenced again.

By and by came six o'clock and the bell.

"Why, I did not know it was so late," cried Bob, jumping from his seat.

"Ain't you ready to go home?" asked the director.

"I don't know whether I am or not," replied Bob, with a queer smile, as he took down the picture of the Good Shepherd and hid it away till the next morning.

He carried a brighter face with him than he had ever done before as he trudged along toward home, swinging his dinner-basket. He didn't look up until he was close to the door, and then who should he see in the doorway but his father ?

"Oh, father!" he cried, and sprang toward him joyfully, laughing and crying. His mother's face was full of happiness as she kissed him.

"God has sent father back to us, Bob," she said.

"That is because 'the Lord is my shepherd,'" said Bob to himself.

"I'm glad you've come, if only for Bob's sake," said the mother to the father, "for they are killing him in that factory."

"They couldn't do that," thought Bob, "for I am His lamb."

"He looks tired out, poor little boy!" said the father.

"'One of the smallest and feeblest I am,'" said Bob to himself.

The next day Bob went to the factory to say "good-bye," for his father found a good situation on shore, and

his son was to be sent to school to study. Bob took the picture of the Good Shepherd away with him, and bade farewell, with a cheery heart, to the great machine which had tired him so day after day.

The Lord indeed had been his Shepherd! He had watched over him when the poor little boy in the big workshop had seemed to be forgotten. Now he is brought into the green pastures.

Ever after, at morning and evening, when his prayer was said, he would gladly think, as he remembered the Good Shepherd, what a blessed thing it is to be one of the lambs of Jesus.

THE END.



